This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

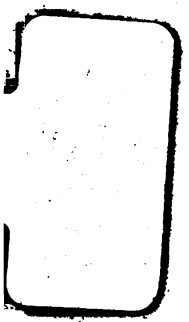
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`



THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

WYOMING SERIES.—No. 1.

WYOMING

BY

EDWARD S. ELLIS

AUTHOR OF "YOUNG PIONEER SERIES," "LOG CABIN SERIES," ETC., ETC.

PHILADELPHIA

HENRY T. COATES & CO.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
108255A
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 1923 L

COPYRIGHT, 1886.
BY
PORTER & COATES.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

"He was stopped in the most startling manner that can be imagined."

WYOMING.

CHAPTER I.

ON the sultry third of July, 1778, Fred Godfrey, a sturdy youth of eighteen years, was riding at a breakneck speed down the Wyoming Valley, in the direction of the settlement, from which he saw columns of smoke rolling upward, and whence, during the few pauses of his steed, he heard the rattling discharge of firearms and the shouts of combatants.

"I wonder whether I am too late," he asked himself more than once, and he urged his splendid horse to a greater pace; "the road never seemed so long."

Ah, there was good cause for the anxiety of the lad, for in that lovely Wyoming Valley lived those who were dearer to him than all the world beside, and whatever fate overtook the settlers must be shared by him as well. He had ridden his horse hard, and his flanks

28X310

glistened with wet and foam, but though every foot of the winding road was familiar to him, it appeared in his torturing impatience to be double its usual length.

Fred Godfrey had received the promise of his father, on the breaking out of the Revolution, that he might enlist in the patriot army so soon as he reached the age of seventeen. On the very day that he attained that age he donned the Continental uniform, made for him by loving hands, bade his friends good-bye, and hastened away to where Washington was longing for just such lusty youths as he who appeared to be several years younger than he really was.

Fred was a handsome, athletic youngster, and he sat his horse with the grace of a crusader. Although the day was warm, and his face glowed with perspiration, he wore his cocked hat, blue coat with its white facings, the belt around the waist and another which passed over one shoulder ere it joined the one around the middle of his body, knee-breeches, and strong stockings and shoes. His rifle was slung across his back, and a couple of loaded

single-barreled pistols were thrust in his belt, where they could be drawn the instant needed.

During his year's service in the patriot army Fred had proven himself an excellent soldier, and the dash and nerve which he showed in more than one instance caught the eye of Washington himself, and won the youth a lieutenancy, at the time when he was the youngest member of his company.

The ardent patriot was full of ambition, and was sure, should no accident befall him, of gaining higher honors. When he tramped with several other recruits from Wyoming to the camp of the Continentals, hundreds of miles away, one of his greatest comforts was the belief that, no matter how the current of war drifted back and forth, there was no danger of its reaching Wyoming. That lovely and secluded valley was so far removed from the tread of the fierce hosts that they might feel secure.

But behold! News came to Washington that the Tories and Indians were about to march into the valley with torch and toma-

hawk, and he was begged to send re-enforcements without delay. The Father of his Country was then on his campaign through the Jerseys. The British army had withdrawn from Philadelphia, where it spent the winter, and Clinton with a part of the force was marching overland to New York, with the Continentals in pursuit.

The campaign was so important that the commander-in-chief could ill afford to spare a man. He knew that Wyoming was not entirely defenseless. Colonel Zebulon Butler of the Continental army was marshaling the old men and boys, and there was the strong defense known as Forty Fort, built by the original settlers from Connecticut, not to mention Wilkesbarre near at hand, so that it would seem the settlers ought to be able to protect themselves against any force likely to be brought against them.

However, Washington told several of his recruits from Wyoming of the appeal that had been made to him, and gave them permission to go to the help of their friends, though he added that he did not think it pos-

sible for them to reach the ground in time to be of service.

But a half dozen started on foot toward the threatened point. Within a day's tramp of their destination they fell somewhat apart, as each, in his familiarity of the country, believed that he knew a shorter and quicker way home than the others.

Fred Godfrey was almost in sight of his home, when he was both pleased and alarmed by coming upon an estray horse. He was saddled and bridled, and though contentedly cropping the grass at the roadside, the perspiration and jaded look showed that he had come from the battle-ground. It was startling to know that such was the fact, and supplemented as it was by the reports of guns, shouts, and the black volumes of smoke pouring upward, Fred was filled with an anguish of misgiving.

Without stopping to make inquiries or to guess who could have owned the estray steed, the young patriot slipped forward, caught the bridle before the animal had time to scent danger, and vaulting lightly into the saddle,

turned the head of the horse toward Wyoming, and striking his heels against his ribs, quickly urged him to a dead run.

"I am needed there," said Fred, urging his spirited animal still more, and peering down the highway; "you're the best horse I ever rode, but I can't afford to spare you now."

Fred Godfrey not only was close to the stirring scenes that marked that memorable massacre, but he was among them sooner even than he anticipated.

CHAPTER II.

JUST here we must turn aside for a minute or two, in order to understand the situation.

On the third of July, Colonel Zebulon Butler, of the Continental army, had marched forth at the head of his two hundred and odd boys, old men, and a few able-bodied soldiers to meet his cousin, the British Colonel Butler, with his horde of soldiers, Tories, and Iroquois Indians.

"We come out to fight, not only for liberty," said the patriot leader, as the battle was about to open, "but for our lives and that which is dearer than our lives—to preserve our homes from conflagration, and our wives and children from the tomahawk."

For a time all went well, and Colonel Zebulon Butler began to hope that the marauders would be driven off, but his force was unsteady, and some of them gave way when

they saw their enemies as they swarmed out of the woods and assailed them.

The trembling mothers who were prayerfully listening to the sounds of battle on the plain above, heard the regular platoon firing which showed that all was going well; but, by and by, the increasing yells, the dropping shots, the blaze of musketry from the swamp on the left of the fighting settlers, where the Iroquois were rushing forth, the panic-stricken fugitives coming into sight here and there, white, panting and wild, told the dreadful truth. The patriots had been overwhelmed by the invaders, who were driving everything before them. But a single hope remained—flight.

Some might succeed in reaching the mountains on the other side the river, and possibly a few would be able to force their way through the dismal wilderness known as the "Shades of Death," and reach Stroudsburg and the sparse settlements on the upper Delaware, many miles away.

The moment the patriots began flying before the Tories and Indians, the panic spread to all.

It is a historical fact that in the flight the pursuers shot many of the patriot officers and soldiers in the thigh, so as to disable them from running, and left them on the ground to be finally disposed of afterwards, while the Iroquois hastened after the other fugitives.

Many of these were tomahawked in their flight; others fled down the river banks in the direction of Wilkesbarre, on the opposite side of the river; others made for the mountains back of the battle-ground; still others hastened to the protection of the Forty Fort, while a great many found a temporary refuge in the undergrowth of Monocacy Island, in the Susquehanna. Still others got across the river and plunged into the mountainous wilderness and began their toilsome tramp through the section I have named, and which is still known as the "Shades of Death."

It was at this hour that Fred Godfrey galloped directly into the massacre in his desperate resolve to do all he could to save his friends.

He had turned off from the main highway, and was making toward a point whence came

the sounds of sharp firing, and such shouts as to show that some unusual conflict was going on. He caught glimpses of figures moving among the trees, but he paid no heed to them, and pressed steadily forward over a half-broken path until he was stopped in the most startling manner that can be imagined—that is, by a rifle-shot.

Some one fired from the front, and undoubtedly would have struck the youthful rider, had not his horse at the very instant snuffed the danger and flung up his head. The action saved the life of the rider at the expense of the steed, who received the cruel bullet and lunged forward and fell to the ground with such suddenness that but for the dexterity of Fred Godfrey he would have been crushed.

As it was, the youth saved himself by a hair's breadth, leaping clear of the saddle and brute just in the nick of time.

The thin wreath of smoke was curling upward from the undergrowth, and the horse was in the act of falling, when a Seneca Indian, in his war paint and agleam with ferocity, bounded from the cover, and with his smoking

gun in his hand and the other grasping the handle of his tomahawk, dashed towards the patriot, whom he evidently believed was badly wounded.

"S'render! s'render!" he shrieked, coming down upon him as if fired from a cannon.

"I'm not in that business just now," snapped out Fred Godfrey, leveling and firing his pistol, with the muzzle almost in the face of the fierce warrior.

The aim could not have been more accurate. The subsequent incidents of the Wyoming massacre were of no interest to that Seneca warrior, for the sharp crack of the little weapon was scarcely more sudden than was the ending of his career.

CHAPTER III.

FRED GODFREY did not stop to reload his pistol. He had another ready for use, and he unshipped his rifle in a twinkling, and hurried for the point where he hoped to gain some tidings of his loved ones. Everything was in a swirl, and of his own knowledge he could not tell the proper course to take.

He ran through the wood toward the point for which he was making at the moment the Seneca Indian shot his horse, but, short as was the distance, all sounds of conflict were over by the time he reached his destination.

Among the parties dashing hither and thither, in the blind effort to escape the Tories and Indians, who seemed to be everywhere, Fred recognized several friends and neighbors. Indeed, since Wyoming was his native place, it may be said that nearly all the fugitives were known to him.

"Why ain't you with your folks?" suddenly asked a middle-aged farmer, who stopped for a moment in his panting flight to exchange a few words and to gain breath.

"Can you tell me where they are?" asked Fred in turn.

"They're well on their way across the Susquehanna by this time, if they haven't reached the other shore."

"How do you know that?" asked Fred, his heart bounding with hope at the news which he was afraid could not be true.

"I saw them go down to the river bank before the fighting begun: Gravity told me that just as soon as he saw how things were going he meant to run to where they were waiting and take them over in his scow."

"How do you know that he has done so?"

"I don't know it of a certainty, but I saw Gravity making for the river bank a while ago, and I've no doubt he did what he set out to do."

This news was not quite so good as Fred supposed from the first remark of his friend, but it was encouraging. Before he could ask

anything more, the other made a break and was gone.

"Oh, if they only *did* get across the river," muttered Fred, making haste thither; "it is their only hope."

And now it is time that you were told something about those in whom the young patriot felt such painful interest.

They were Maggie Brainerd, whose father, a leading settler from Connecticut, had gone out with the company to fight the invaders of Wyoming; Eva, her eight-year-old sister, and Aunt Peggy Carey, the sister of the dead parent, and who had been the best of mothers to the children for the last three years. Maggie and Eva were the half-sisters of Fred Godfrey, between whom existed the sweetest affection.

Maggie was a year younger than Fred, and Aunt Peggy was a peppery lady in middle life, who detested Tories as much as she did the father of all evil himself. When Mr. Brainerd bade each an affectionate good-bye and hurried away with the others to take part in the disastrous fight, they huddled close to the river

bank, hoping he would soon return to them with the news that the invaders had been routed and driven away.

Side by side with the patriotic father marched the servant of the family—Gravity Gimp, an enormous African, powerful, good-natured, and so devoted to every member of his household that he gladly risked his life for them.

Gravity went into the battle with his gun on his shoulder and with the resolve to do his part like a man. He loaded and fired many times, but at the first sign of panic he broke and made for the river side, determined to save the women folks there, or die in the attempt. He lost sight of his master, whom he left loading and firing with the coolness of a veteran. It did not occur to Gravity that he might do good service by giving some attention to the head of the family, who had not half the strength and endurance of himself.

Aunt Peggy, Maggie, and Eva waited on the river bank, with throbbing hearts, the issue of the battle. When it became certain that the patriots had suffered a check, they hoped that

it was only for a brief time, and that they would speedily regain the lost ground.

While they waited, the smoke from blazing Fort Wintermoot was wafted down the valley, and became perceptible to the taste as well as to the sight. The fugitives were seen to be taking to the river, fields, and woods, and the painted Iroquois were rushing hither and thither, gathering in their fearful harvest of death.

"Aunt," said Maggie, taking the hand of Eva, "it won't do to wait another minute."

"But what will become of your father and Gravity?"

"They are in the hands of God," was the reverential reply of the courageous girl, who had asked herself the same question.

When her loved parent had kissed her goodbye he made her promise that on the very moment she became assured of the defeat of the patriots she would lose no time in getting as far away as possible. She would have felt justified in breaking that pledge could she have believed there was any hope of helping her father, but she knew there was none.

Eva was in sore distress, for now that she understood, in her vague way, the whole peril, her heart went out to the absent ones.

"Where's papa and Gravity?" she asked, holding back, with the tears running down her cheeks.

"They are doing their best to keep the bad Indians away," replied Maggie, restraining by a great effort her own feelings.

"I don't want to go till papa comes," pleaded the broken-hearted little one.

"But he wants us to go; he told me so, Eva."

"Did he? Then I'll go with you, but I feel dreadful bad."

And she ran forward, now that she knew she was doing what her father wished her to do.

CHAPTER IV.

THE scene at this moment was terrifying. The river was swarming with fleeing soldiers, old men, women, and children, struggling to reach the other side and get away from the merciless hordes assailing them.

Where so many were taking to the river, it would seem that there was little hope for the three, who were moving along the bank toward some point that would take them out of the rush.

For a time they attracted no special notice, but it was impossible that this should continue.

"Oh, the scand'lous villains!" muttered Aunt Peggy, applying her favorite epithet to the Tories; "how I would like to wring their necks! I've no doubt that Jake Golcher is among them. The idea of his coming to our house to court you—"

"There, there," interrupted Maggie, "this

is no time to speak of such things; Jacob Golcher is among them, for I saw him a few minutes ago, and we may need his friendship."

"I'd like to see me—"

"There's Gravity!" broke in Eva, clapping her hands. The other two, turning their heads, saw that she spoke the truth.

The bulky negro servant of the family came limping toward them with his smoking musket in hand. He was bare-headed, like Maggie and Eva, and his garments were badly torn. He was panting from his severe exertion, and the perspiration streamed down his dusty face.

"Where's father?" was the first question Maggie asked, as he drew near.

"Can't tell," was the reply; "when I last seed him, he was fightin' like all creation, and graderlly workin' off toward the woods."

"Then there is hope for him!" exclaimed Maggie, looking yearningly at the servant, as if asking for another word of encouragement.

"Hope for him? Course dere am, and so dere am for you if you hurry out ob dis place."

"But where can we go, Gravity? I prom-

ised father to try to get away, but how can we do so?"

"I'll soon show you," replied the African, rapidly recovering his wind, and moving along the bank in the direction of the present site of Kingston.

Gravity knew there was no chance for his friends until they reached the other side of the river, but it would not do to enter the stream near where they then stood.

A portion of the Susquehanna was so deep that it would be necessary for all to swim, and, strange as it may seem, the only one of the party who could do so was Maggie Brainerd herself. Though Gravity had lived for years along the river, he could not swim a stroke.

It was a wonder that the little party had not already attracted the notice of the horde swarming along the shores. They must do so very soon and Gravity hurried his gait.

"I'm looking for dat scow ob mine," he explained; "if any ob you happen to cotch sight ob it—"

Eva Brainerd gave utterance to such a shriek that every one stopped and looked toward her.

Without speaking, she pointed up the bank where a hideously painted Iroquois was in the act of drawing back his gleaming tomahawk and hurling it at Gravity Gimp, who until that moment was unconscious of his peril.

The negro held his loaded gun in hand, but the time was too brief for him to turn it to account. In fact, at the very moment he looked at the redskin, the latter let fly.

With remarkable quickness, Gravity, knowing that the Indian was aiming at his head, dropped his shoulders just as the weapon whizzed past, and striking the ground, went bounding end over end for a dozen yards.

The Iroquois was amazed by his own failure. He stared for a single moment, and then, seeing that the dusky fellow was unhurt, he brought his gun to his shoulder, with the intention of destroying the only protector the women and children had, so as to leave them defenseless.

But in the way of raising his gun to his shoulder, taking aim and firing, Gravity Gimp

was five seconds in advance of the noble red man: enough said.

"De fust duty arter shootin' off a gun am to load her up agin," remarked Gravity, as he began pouring a charge from his powder horn into the palm of his hand, preparatory to letting it run down the barrel of his weapon.

"Don't wait," pleaded Maggie, greatly agitated by what had just taken place, and by the shouts, cries, and reports of guns about them; "if we tarry we are lost."

"I reckon I'm too well 'quainted wid dese parts to got lost," said the servant, who was really making all the haste he could in the way of reloading his gun. In a moment he had poured the powder into the pan of his weapon.

"Now we'll trabbel," he said, hurrying again along the river shore. He took enormous strides, his gait being that peculiar hurried walk which is really faster than an ordinary trot.

It compelled the others to run, Maggie still clasping the hand of Eva, while Aunt Peggy

forgot her dignity in the terrors of the time and held her pace with them.

The truth was that though Gravity was the owner of a scow which he had partly hidden at the time he saw the possibility of its need, he was afraid it had been taken by others of the fugitives that had stumbled upon it.

"Less than a hundred yards remained to be passed, and, as that was fast put behind them, even the phlegmatic Gravity began to show some nervousness.

"I thinks we're gwine to make it," he said, recognizing several well-known landmarks; "and, if we does, and gits to de oder shore and has 'bout two hundred and fifty miles start ob de Tories and Injins, why dat will be sort ob cheerin' like."

All this time the sable guide, although walking fast, limped as if he were hurt.

"What makes you lame?" asked Eva.

"I was hit by a cannon-ball on de knee," was the astonishing answer: "it slewed my leg round a little, but I'll soon be all right again."

At this moment, when the hearts of all were beating high with hope, a rustling was heard

among the undergrowth on their right, and the little company paused and looked up, expecting to see a dozen or more painted Iroquois in their war paint.

The *click, click* of the African's rifle, as he drew back the flint, showed that he was ready to do everything to defend those who cowered behind him like scared sheep.

To the surprise of each, however, a single man came hurriedly forth. All identified him as Jake Golcher, an old resident of Wyoming, but one of the bitterest of Tories, whose hatred of his former neighbors and friends seemed as intense as that of Queen Esther, or Katharine Montour, one of the leaders of the invaders.

He was as much surprised as the fugitives themselves, and he stared at them with open mouth, slouch hat thrown on the back of his head, and the stock of his gun resting at his feet. He was the first to recover his speech, and, with an expletive, he demanded:

"Where did *you* come from?"

"Am you abdressing your remarks to me or to de ladies?" asked Gravity of the man whom

he detested, and of whom, even then, he had not the slightest fear.

"I'm speaking to all of you," said Golcher, glancing furtively at the vinegar face of Aunt Peggy, and bestowing a beaming smile on Maggie Brainerd.

Much as the latter despised the Tory, she had too much sense to show it at this time. Walking toward him, she clasped her hands, and with an emotion that was certainly genuine, she said:

"Oh, Mr. Golcher, won't you help us?"

"What are you axin' him dat for?" broke in Gravity; "we don't want no help from *him*."

Aunt Peggy was evidently of the same mind, for though she said nothing, she gave a sniff and toss of her head that were more expressive than words.

The sallow face of the Tory flushed, as he looked down in the sweet countenance of Maggie Brainerd, made tenfold more winsome by the glow of the cheeks and the sparkle of the eyes, arising from the excitement of her situation.

Bear in mind that the party had gone so far along the bank of the river that they were somewhat removed from the swarm of fleeing fugitives, and therefore no immediate danger threatened; but the call for flight was as loud as ever, and a few minutes' delay was liable to bring down a score of Indians and Tories.

To none was this fact more evident than to Maggie Brainerd. In truth, she believed that Golcher was at the head of a company within call, and she sought to win his good-will before it was too late.

Gravity stood with his gun at his side, the hammer raised, and ready to fire the instant it became necessary. One foot was thrown forward, and his whole demeanor was that of enmity and defiance.

I may as well say that the servant was trying hard to persuade himself that it was not his duty to raise his piece and shoot the renegade without any further warning.

It would have been shocking, and yet there would have been some palliation for it.

In a short time the African's debate with

himself ended in what may be called a compromise.

"I'll keep my eye on him while dis foolish conversation goes on, and de minute he winks at Miss Maggie, or says anyting dat she don't like, I'll pull trigger."

CHAPTER V.

"DO you want me to befriend you?" asked the renegade, bending his head down close to the scared countenance of Maggie Brainerd, smiling and trying to speak in so low a voice that no one else could catch his words.

"Of course I do; don't you see what danger we are in? Oh, Mr. Golcher—"

"Don't *Mister* me," he interrupted, with a reproving grin; "call me *Jake*."

"Oh, Jake, have you seen anything of father?"

"Where would I see him?"

"Why, he went out with the rest to fight the Indians and Tories, and you were with them."

"Oh, yes; I did see him," said Golcher, as though the incident was so slight that he had forgotten it for the time: "he fought well."

"Was he—was he—Oh, Jake, tell me?—was he *hurt?*"

"I don't think he got so much as a scratch; he was with three or four others, and they were getting in the best kind of work; but you know it was no use for any one; I saw that they would be shot down where they stood, so I ran up and told your father to follow me; you know that nobody dare touch him when *I* took charge. I led him and his friends back toward the mountains and stayed by them till all danger was over, and then I bade them good-bye: if they have taken the least care and done as I told them to do, they are a great deal safer than *you* are at this very minute."

Maggie Brainerd's heart sank within her. She knew that the story that Jake Golcher had just told her was without an iota of truth. He had lied so clumsily that he had not deceived her at all.

The very question which he had asked about her parent was proof that he had not seen him, and therefore could know nothing of him.

The young lady was shocked, but she was helpless. Her duty was to do her utmost for the safety of those who were now with her,

and she was sure that Golcher could give great help, if he chose to do so.

"Jake," said she, speaking with all the earnestness of her nature, "this is a dreadful day for Wyoming; I can hardly realize what has taken place; I do not believe that any one on this side of the river is safe."

"Of course he isn't—that is, none of the rebels is; *our* folks are all right."

"Can you save us?"

"I don't know what's to hinder—that is, if I take the notion, but I don't feel like doing much for that spitfire of an aunt, that insulted me the last time that I called at your house."

"You musn't mind her peculiarities; she is a good woman, and then, you know, she is my friend."

"Well, *that* makes a good deal of difference —that's a fact," remarked Golcher, with such a grotesque attempt to look arch and loving, that the watchful African, instead of firing upon him as he had meant to do, smiled.

"I'm afeard he don't feel berry well; he'll feel a good deal worse if Aunt Peggy or me gets hold of him."

"And then," added Golcher, glancing at Gravity, "*you* heard the impudence of that servant."

"Because he is a servant you ought to excuse him; I should feel very sorry to have him suffer harm."

"I don't mind taking particular care of *you* and your little sister there, but I would prefer to leave Aunt Peggy, as you call her, and the darkey to shift for themselves."

"Then I do not want you to do anything for Eva and me," said Maggie, resolutely, feeling that she was throwing away invaluable time by holding converse with this man; "God has been better to us than we deserve, and we shall leave all with him."

She turned to move off, much to the relief of Aunt Peggy, who had hard work to hide her impatience, when Golcher saw that he had gone too far. Catching her arm, he said:

"Don't be so fast; where will you go, if you don't go with me?"

"Gravity is our guide."

"I haven't told you I wouldn't take care of you, have I?"

"But if you are unwilling to include *all* of us, I do not want your friendship."

"Then for the sake of *you* I will save you *all*, though nobody beside me would do so; but, Maggie, I'll expect a little better treatment from you when I come to your house again."

At this point Golcher saw that the patience of the young lady was exhausted. Her companions were ready to chide her for halting to speak to him, though the words that passed took but a few minutes. He reached out his hand to lay it on her arm, but she drew back.

"Maggie," said he, warningly; "when I came down the river bank, I left six Seneca warriors among the trees back there; they are tired waiting for me; their guns are loaded, and I have only to raise my hand over my head to have 'em fire every one of 'em; if they do it, they will all be *pointed this way*."

Maggie Brainerd was sure the Tory spoke the truth.

"You will not do that, Jake, I am sure."

"Not if you act right; follow me."

Maggie reached out her hand as an invita-

tion for Eva to come to her; but Aunt Peggy grasped one of the little palms in her own, for she had overheard the invitation. When Maggie looked around, her aunt compressed her thin lips and shook her head in a most decided fashion.

"*No, ma'am;* Eva stays here: if you want to go off with that scamp you can do so, but the rest of us *don't.*"

"But, aunt, what shall we do? There's no escape for us unless we put ourselves in his care; Jake has promised to see that no harm befalls us from the Indians."

"Ugh!" exclaimed the aunt, with a shudder of disgust: "I'd rather trust myself with the worst Indians that are now in the valley than with *him.*"

"Them's my sentiments," broke in Gravity; "we don't want to fool away any more time with *him.*"

"Then you'll take the consequences," said the Tory, trembling with anger. "I offered to protect you and you refused to have me; I'll still take care of Maggie and Eva, but as for you others, you shall see—"

CHAPTER VI.

THE last few sentences that passed between Maggie Brainerd and Golcher, the Tory, were heard, not only by Aunt Maggie, but by the African servant.

This was due to the fact that the renegade in his excitement forgot his caution, besides which the servant took occasion to approach quite close to the two.

A very brief space of time was occupied in the conversation, but brief as it was, Gravity was resolved that it should end. He did not believe the declaration of Golcher that he had a party of half-a-dozen Senecas within call, though it was possible that he spoke the truth; but beyond a doubt the savages were so numerous that a summons from the Tory would bring a number to the spot.

When, therefore, Jake adjusted his lips for a signal, Gravity bounded forward and caught him by the throat.

"Don't be in a hurry to let out a yawp; if dere's any hollerin' to be done, I'll take charge of it."

Golcher was as helpless as a child in the vise-like grip of those iron fingers. He not only was unable to speak, but he found it hard work to breathe.

Dropping his gun, he threw up both hands in a frantic effort to loosen the clutch of those fingers.

"Why, Gravity," said the horrified Maggie; "I'm afraid you will strangle him."

"And I'm afraid I *won't*," replied the African, putting on a little more pressure.

Gravity, however, had no intention of proceeding to extremities, though he might have found justification in so doing. He regulated the pressure of his powerful right hand so that his victim, by putting forth his best efforts, was able to get enough breath to save himself.

"Young man," said Gravity, still holding him fast, "I don't think dis am a healthy place for you; de best ting you can do am to leave a little sooner dan possible."

"Let—me—let—me—go!" gurgled Golcher, still vainly trying to free himself.

"I don't find dat I've got much use for you, so I'll let you off, but de next time I lays hand onto you, you won't got off so easy, and bein' as you am goin', I'll give you a boost."

To the delight of Aunt Peggy and the horror of Maggie Brainerd, Gravity Gimp now wheeled the Tory around as though he were the smallest child, and actually delivered a kick that lifted him clear of the ground.

Not only once, but a second and third time was the indignity repeated. Then, with a fierce effort, Golcher wrenched himself free from the terrible fingers on the back of his neck, and, plunging among the trees, vanished.

"Dat ar might come handy," said Gravity, picking up the loaded musket which the panic-stricken Tory had left behind him and handing it to Aunt Peggy, who asked, with a shudder:

"Do you s'pose I would touch it?"

"Let me have it," said Maggie; "I con-

sider it fortunate that we have two guns with us."

It was a good thing, indeed, for Maggie Brainerd, like many of the brave maidens of a hundred years ago, was an expert in handling the awkward weapons of ou Revolutionary sires. With this at her command, the chances were she would be heard from before the rising of the morrow's sun.

But, if Jake Golcher was a mild enemy before, it was certain he was now an unrelenting one. He would neglect no effort to avenge himself upon all for the indignity he had received.

The African understood this, and he lost no time in getting away from the spot with the utmost speed.

It was now about five o'clock in the afternoon, but it was the eve of the Fourth of July, and the days were among the longest in the year. It would not be dark for three hours, and who could tell what might take place in that brief period?

Extremely good fortune had attended our friends thus far, but it was not reasonable to expect it to continue without break.

The Tory was scarcely out of sight when Gravity started on a trot down the bank, with the others close behind him.

"Bus'ness hab got to be pushed on de jump," he said, by way of explanation; "we ain't done wid dat chap yet."

It was scarcely a minute later when he uttered an exclamation of thankfulness, and those directly behind saw him stoop down and, grasping the prow of a small flat-boat or scow, draw it from beneath the undergrowth and push it into the water.

Such craft are not managed by oars, and Gimp handed a long pole to Maggie, saying:

"Use dat de best ye kin, and don't lose no time gittin' to de oder shore."

"But what are *you* going to do, Gravity?"

"I'se gwine wid you, but I'm afeard de boat won't hold us all, and I'll hab to ride on de outside."

The Susquehanna is generally quite shallow along shore, and it was necessary to push the scow several yards before the water was found deep enough to float it with its load.

Gravity laid the two guns within the boat,

and then, picking up the *petite* Maggie, hastily carried her the short distance and placed her dry-shod within, where she immediately assumed control by means of the pole, which was a dozen feet in length.

Aunt Peggy and Eva were deposited beside her, by which time the scow was sunk within a few inches of the gunwales: had the African followed them, it would have been swamped.

As it was, the faithful negro was assuming great risk, for, as have stated, he could not swim a stroke; but the circumstances compelled such a course, and he did not hesitate.

"You see, folks," said he, as he began shoving the craft out into the river; "dat dis wessel won't carry any more passengers."

Just then he stepped into a hole, which threw him forward on his face with a loud splash, his head going under and nearly strangling him. He was thoughtful enough to let go the boat, and recovered himself with considerable effort, after causing a slight scream from Eva, who was afraid he was going to drown.

The freedom from immediate danger ended when the fugitives put out from the shore.

The suddenness of the defeat, pursuit, and massacre at Wyoming prevented anything like the use of boats by the fleeing patriots, who were beset by a merciless foe.

Had the scow been near where the main stream of fugitives were rushing into the river and striving to reach the opposite bank, the boat would not have kept afloat for a minute. It not only would have been grasped by a score of the fugitives, but it would have become the the target for a number of rifles, which could hardly have failed to kill all the occupants.

The stream rapidly deepened, and by and by Gimp was up to his neck and moving rather gingerly, with his two broad hands resting on the stern of the boat.

Maggie Brainerd stood erect in the craft, pole in hand, and, bending slightly as she pressed the support against the river bottom, held on until it was almost beyond her reach, when she withdrew it, and, reaching forward, placed the lower end against the bottom again, shoving the awkward vessel with as much skill as the negro himself could have shown.

Aunt Peggy, as trim and erect as ever, was

seated near the prow, while Eva nestled at her feet with her head in her lap. When they observed how deep the scow sank in the water, naturally enough theirs fears were withdrawn from the great calamity, and centered upon the one of drowning.

The ancient lady glanced askance at the turbid current, while Eva turned pale and shivered more than once, as she looked affrightedly at the hungry river that seemed to be climbing slowly up the frail partition which kept it away from the fugitives.

Suddenly the feet of Gravity failed to reach bottom, and, sinking down until his ears and mouth were scarcely above the surface, he bore slightly upon the support and began threshing the water with his feet, so that at a distance the scow looked as if it had a steam screw at the stern driving it forward.

This rather cumbersome means of propulsion really accomplished more than would be supposed. Despite the fact that the African could not float himself, he managed his pedal extremities with skill, and the boat was quick to respond.

CHAPTER VII.

MEANWHILE, Lieutenant Fred Godfrey found himself mixed up in some events of a stirring character.

It will be recalled that while hunting for his friends he was told that they had taken to a flat-boat, or scow, and were probably across the Susquehanna.

If such were the fact, the true course for Fred was to follow them without a second's delay.

His informant no doubt meant to tell the truth, but he had given a wrong impression.

It was true, as has been shown, that the female members of the Brainerd family had started across the river under charge of the herculean Gravity Gimp, but Mr. Brainerd himself was still on the side where the battle took place, though his son believed he was with the others that had taken to the boat.

Fred was making his way as best he could to the river side, when he became aware that he had attracted the notice of several Indians, who made for him. In the general flurry he did not notice the alarming fact till the party was almost upon him. Then he turned and fired among them, threw away his gun, and made for the river at the top of his speed.

He was remarkably fleet of foot, and in a fair race would have held his own with any Iroquois in Wyoming Valley; but there was no telling when or where some more of the dusky foes would leap up and join in the pursuit.

It was fortunate, perhaps, that the Susquehanna was so near, for the pursuit was no more than fairly begun when it was reached. Knowing he would be compelled to swim for life, he ran as far out in the water as he could, and then took what may be called a tremendous "header," throwing himself horizontally through the air, but with his head a little lower than the rest of the body, and with his arms extended and hands pressed palm to palm in front.

He struck the water at a point beyond his

depth, and drawing in one deep inspiration as he went beneath, he swam with might and main until he could hold his breath no longer.

When he rose to the surface it was a long way beyond where he went under, and much farther than where the Indians were looking for him to reappear.

But they were ready with cocked guns, and the moment the head came to view they opened fire; but Fred expected that, and waiting only long enough to catch a mouthful of air, he went under and sped along like a loon beneath the surface.

Every rod thus gained increased his chances, but it did not by any means remove the danger, for it takes no very skillful marksman to pick off a man across the Susquehanna, and many a fugitive on that fateful day fell after reaching the eastern shore.

Working with his usual energy, Fred Godfrey soon found himself close to Monocacy Island, covered as it was with driftwood and undergrowth, and upon which many of the settlers had taken refuge.

Almost the first person whom he recognized

was the middle-aged friend, who told him about the escape of the Brainerd family in the scow that Maggie and the servant had propelled across the Susquehanna.

This friend was now able to add that he had seen them crossing at a point considerably below the island. He saw them fired at by the Indians and Tories on shore, but he was satisfied that no one of the little company was struck.

To the dismay of the youth, the neighbor assured him that Mr. Brainerd, his father, was not with the company.

This made another change in the plans of the son. Quite hopeful that those who had crossed the river were beyond danger, his whole solicitude was now for his beloved parent. Despite the danger involved, he resolved to return to the western shore, and to stay there until he learned about his parent.

Fred was too experienced, however, to act rashly. He carefully watched his chance and swam down the stream until he was well below the swarm of fugitives, and so managed to reach the shore without detection, or rather

without recognition, since it was impossible that he should escape observation.

Finally, he stepped out of the water and went up the bank, without, as he believed, attracting attention, and, suppressing all haste, walked in the direction of Forty Fort.

The battle-field, whereon the famous monument was afterwards erected, was about two miles above Forty Fort, where a feeble garrison was left when Colonel Zebulon Butler marched up the river bank, and met the Tories and Indians on that July afternoon.

Fred had landed at a point near the battle-ground, and he was in doubt whether to make search through the surrounding wood and marsh, or to steal down the river to the fort in the hope of finding his father there.

Many of the fugitives in their wild flight had thrown away their weapons (as indeed Fred Godfrey himself had done), so that it was an easy matter for him to find a gun to take the place of the one from which he had parted.

The youth made up his mind to visit the fort, and he had taken a dozen steps in that

direction, when with whom should he come face to face but his beloved father himself?

The meeting was a happy one indeed, the two embracing with delight.

The father had no thought that his son had reached Wyoming, though he knew that Washington had been asked to send them reenforcements.

Fred told the good news about the rest of the family: it was joy indeed to the parent, who was on his way to the river bank to look for them at the time he met his son.

Mr. Brainerd said that he had fought as long as there was any hope, when he turned and fled with the rest. It was the same aimless effort to get away, without any thought of the right course to take; but he was more fortunate than most of the others, for he succeeded in reaching the cover of the woods without harm.

"The best thing for us to do," said the parent, "is to go up the river so as to get above the point where, it seems, the most danger threatens."

"You mean toward Fort Wintermoot—that

is, where it stood, for I see that it has been burned."

"Yes, but we needn't go the whole distance; night isn't far off, and it will be a hard task to find the folks after we get across."

Accordingly, father and son moved to the north, that is up the western bank of the river. This took them toward Fort Wintermoot, which was still smoking, and toward Fort Jenkins, just above. At the same time they were leaving the scene of the struggle a short time before.

Mr. Brainerd had no weapon, while his son carried the newly-found rifle and his two pistols. He had drawn the charges of these and reloaded them, so that they were ready for use.

"There's one thing that ought to be understood," said Mr. Brainerd, after they had walked a short distance; "and that is what is to be done by the survivor in case one of us falls."

"If I should be shot or captured," said Fred, impressively, "don't waste any time in trying to help me, but do all you can to get across

the river, rejoin the family, and push on toward Stroudsburg; for I don't believe you'll be safe at any point this side."

"I promise you to do my utmost in that direction; and, if it should be my misfortune to fall into their hands, you must not imperil your life for me."

"I shall be careful of what I do," said Fred, refusing to make any more definite pledge, after having secured that of his companion not to step aside to befriend him in the event of misfortune.

Little did either dream that the test was so close at hand.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE two were compelled to pick their way with extreme care, for there was no saying when some of the wandering Indians would come upon them. It was necessary, as our friends thought, to go considerably farther up, before it would be at all safe to cross the river.

They were yet some distance from the point, when a slight disturbance was heard in a patch of woods in front, and they stopped.

"Wait a minute or two, until I find out what it means," said Fred; "it will save time to go through there, but it won't do to undertake it if it isn't safe."

And before Mr. Brainerd could protest, his son moved forward, as stealthily as an Indian scout, while the former concealed himself until the issue of the reconnoissance should become known.

The old gentleman realized too vividly the

horrors of the massacre still going on around them to permit himself to run any unnecessary risk, now that there was a prospect of rejoining his family; and he regretted that his courageous child had gone forward so impulsively, instead of carefully flanking what seemed to be a dangerous spot.

But it was too late now to recall him, for he was beyond sight, and Mr. Brainerd could only wait and hope for the best, while, it may be truly said, he feared the worst.

It was not long before Fred Godfrey began strongly to suspect he had committed an error, from which it required all the skill at his command to extricate himself.

The wood that he had entered covered something less than an acre, and was simply a denser portion of the wilderness through which they had been making their way. He had scarcely entered it when the murmur of voices told him that others were in advance, and he knew enough of the Indians to recognize the sounds as made by them.

It was at that very moment he ought to have withdrawn, and, rejoining Mr. Brainerd, left

the neighborhood as silently as possible, but his curiosity led him on.

That curiosity was gratified by the sight of six of his own people held prisoners by a group of twice as many Indians, who, beyond question, were making preparations for putting their victims to death.

As seems to be the rule, these prisoners, all of whom were able-bodied men, most of them young, were in a state of despair and collapse; they were standing up unbound and unarmed, and looking stolidly at their captors, who were also on their feet, but were talking and gesticulating with much earnestness.

The most remarkable figure in the group was a woman. She was doing the principal part of the talking, and in a voice so loud, and accompanied by such energetic gestures, that there could be no doubt that she was the leader.

She was attired in Indian costume, and was evidently a half-breed, though it has been claimed by many that she was of pure Indian blood. She was beyond middle life, her hair being plentifully sprinkled with gray, but she

still possessed great strength and activity, and was well fitted to command the Indians, as she did when they marched into and took possession of Forty Fort on the succeeding day.

A son of this strange woman had been killed a short time before, and she was roused to the highest point of fury. She demanded not only the blood of those already captured, but that others should be brought in; and she had established a camp in the place named, until a sufficient number could be secured to satisfy, to a partial extent, her vengeful mood.

She is known in history as Queen Esther and as Katharine Montour. She was queen of the Seneca tribe of Indians—one of the Iroquois or Six Nations—the most powerful confederation of aborigines ever known on this continent.

Her home was in central New York, where the Six Nations had been ruled by Sir William Johnson, the British superintendent, and, among all the furies who entered Wyoming Valley on that day in July, there was none who excelled this being in the ferocity displayed toward the prisoners.

"That must be Queen Esther," thought Fred Godfrey, as he cautiously surveyed the scene; "I have heard of the hecate—"

At that instant a slight rustling behind caused him to turn his head, just in time to catch sight of a shadowy body that came down upon him like an avalanche.

He struggled fiercely, but other Indians joined in, and in a twinkling the lieutenant was disarmed and helpless, and was conducted triumphantly into the presence of Katharine Montour, whose small, black eyes sparkled as she surveyed this addition to her roll of victims, for whose torture she was arranging at that moment.

CHAPTER IX.

GRAVITY GIMP bore as lightly as he could on the stern of the boat, which was already so heavily laden that a little more weight would have sunk it below the surface.

But steady progress was made, and everything was going along "swimmingly," as may be said, when the craft and its occupants began to receive alarming attention from the shore.

The reports of guns, and the shouting and whooping were so continuous that the fugitives had become used to them. The whistling of the bullets about their ears, and the call of Gimp, notified the ladies of their danger, and caused an outcry from Aunt Peggy.

"They're shooting at us, as sure as you live; stoop down, Maggie!"

The elderly lady and little Eva got down so low that they were quite safe. Maggie, however, kept her feet a few moments. Looking back toward the shore, she saw six or eight

Indians standing close to the water and deliberately firing at them.

"Stoop down," said Gravity, in a low voice. "I'll take care ob de boat and you see what you can do wid de gun."

The plucky girl acted upon the suggestion. Picking up the weapon of the African (with which she had shot more than one deer), she sank upon her knee, and took careful aim at the group on the shore.

Gravity stopped threshing the water, and twisted around so as to watch the result, while Aunt Peggy and Eva fixed their eyes on the group with painful interest.

When the whip-like crack of the gun broke upon their ears, the spectators saw one of the Iroquois leap in the air and stagger backward, though he did not fall.

"You hit him!" exclaimed the delighted Gravity; "dey'll larn dat some oder folks can fire off a gun as well as dey."

The shot of the girl caused consternation for a minute or two among the group. They had evidently no thought of any one "striking back," now that the panic was everywhere.

They could be seen gathering around the warrior, who was helped a few steps and allowed to sit on the ground.

Dropping the rifle, Maggie Brainerd caught up the pole once more and applied it with all the strength at her command, while Gravity threshed the water with renewed vigor.

Hope was now re-awakened that the river might be crossed in safety.

In the nature of things, the dismay among the Iroquois could not last long. They were joined by several new arrivals, among whom was at least one white man.

They saw that the boat was getting farther away, and the fugitives were likely to escape.

Gravity, who continually glanced over his shoulder, warned Maggie and the rest (who, however, were equally alert), so that when the boat was again struck by the whistling bullets no one was harmed.

"Miss Maggie," whispered Gravity, peering over the gunwale, his round face rising like the moon under a full eclipse, "you know dere's another loaded gun; try it agin."

"I musn't miss," she said to herself, sighting the weapon, "for if ever there was a case of self-defense this is one."

All remained quiet while she carefully drew a bead at the foremost figure. Before her aim was sure, she recognized her target as Jake Golcher.

She was startled, and for an instant undecided; but she could not shoot him, even though he deserved it. She slightly swerved the point of her piece, hoping to strike one of the Indians, with the result, however, that she missed altogether.

"Maggie," said Aunt Peggy, with rasping severity, "I've a mind to box your ears; you missed that Tory on purpose; you ought to be ashamed of yourself; I'll tell your father what a perjurer you are."

"I could not do it," replied Maggie, smiling in spite of herself at the spiteful earnestness of her relative.

"Then load up and try it again."

"Time is too precious to delay for loading guns and shooting at our old acquaintances, even if they are Tories."

Aunt Peggy was wise enough to see that Maggie could not be dictated to under such circumstances. She, therefore, held her peace, and watched the young lady, who applied the pole with a vigor hardly second to that of Gravity in his efforts of another kind to force the scow through the water.

Under their joint labors the clumsy craft advanced with considerable speed, every minute taking it farther from the shots that still came from the enemies they were leaving behind.

By and by, the African, while kicking, struck bottom with one foot. With the leverage thus obtained, he shoved the boat faster than before.

By this time those in the rear had ceased firing, and the interest of the occupants of the craft centered on the shore they were approaching.

The water shallowed rapidly, and soon the head and shoulders of Gravity Gimp rose above the gunwale of the scow. He was now enabled to look beyond the boat and scrutinize the point where they were about to land.

He had hardly taken the first glance, when he checked the vessel with such suddenness that Maggie nearly lost her balance. Looking inquiringly at him, she asked, with alarm.

"What's the matter, Gravity?"

"It's no use, Miss Maggie," was the despairing reply; "we may as well give up; don't you see we're cotched? The Tories hab got us *dis* time, suah!"

CHAPTER X.

THE scow containing the three fugitives was nearing the eastern shore of the Susquehanna, when the negro servant, Gravity Gimp, stopped, checking the craft by grasping the stern.

At that moment the water scarcely reached his waist, and was shoaling at every step, so that the boat was entirely under his control.

He had good cause for his alarm, for, only an instant before, he had looked behind him at the group of Tories and Indians on the western shore, who had stopped firing, and he saw that several had entered the river with the intention of pushing the pursuit through the desolate wilderness already spoken of as the "Shades of Death."

The distance between the pursuer and pursued was slight, for the Susquehanna is not a very broad river where it meanders through

the Wyoming Valley, and there remained so much of daylight that the danger of a collision with their enemies was threatening indeed.

Still the sight increased the efforts to avoid them, and Gravity had not lost his heart by any means, when he looked over the heads of his friends to decide where they were to land.

It will be recalled that they had started below where most of the fugitives were pushing for the other bank, and the action of the current had carried them still lower, so there was reason for hoping they were outside of immediate peril.

But the African had no more than fixed his eye on the point, where there was much wood and undergrowth, than he noticed an agitation of the bushes, and, to his dismay, a tall figure clad in paint and feathers stepped forth to view.

He had a long rifle in one hand, and was daubed in the hideous fashion of the wild Indian on the war-path.

The fact that he advanced thus openly in front of the fugitives, who had been exchang-

ing shots with their foes behind them, was proof to Gravity that he was only one of a large party hidden in the bushes, and into whose hands he and his friends were about to throw themselves.

Thus it was that the little group was caught between two fires.

Worse than all, the two guns in the scow, with which something like a fight might have been made, were empty, and it was out of the question to reload them at this critical moment.

No wonder, therefore, when the faithful negro discovered the trap into which they had run, that he straightened up, checked the boat, and uttered the exclamation I have quoted.

The ladies, with blanched faces glanced from one shore to the other, wondering to which party it was best to surrender themselves.

At this time, the warrior in front stood calmly contemplating them, as if sure there was no escape, and nothing could be added to the terror of the patriots.

"Let us turn down the river," said the brave-hearted Maggie, thrusting the pole into

the water again; "they have not captured us yet, and it is better we should all be shot than fall into——"

Just then the four were struck dumb by hearing the savage in front call out:

"What have you stopped work for? Don't turn down the river; hurry over, or those consarned Iroquois will overhaul you!"

Unquestionably that was not the voice of an Indian!

And yet the words were spoken by the painted individual who confronted them, and whom they held in such terror.

He must have suspected their perplexity, for, noticing that they still hesitated, his mouth expanded into a broad grin, as he added:

"Don't you know me? I'm Habakkuk McEwen, and I'm ready to do all I can for you. Hurry up, Gravity; use that pole in the right direction, Maggie; cheer up, Eva, and how are you, Aunt Peggy?"

No words can picture the relief of the little party, on learning that he whom they mistook for an Indian was a white man and a friend.

Habakkuk McEwen was a neighbor, as he

had called himself, and came from the same section in Connecticut which furnished the Brainerds and most of the settlers in the Wyoming Valley.

He had enlisted but a few months before, and, though not very brilliant mentally, yet he was well liked in the settlement.

Excepting two individuals—whose identity the reader knows—it may be safely said there was no one whom the patriots could have been more pleased to see than Habakkuk, for he added so much strength to the company that was sorely in need of it, but it may as well be admitted, that the honest fellow, although a volunteer in the defense of his country against the British invaders, was sometimes lacking in the courage so necessary to the successful soldier. However, there he was, and the words were scarcely out of his mouth when the scow ran plump against the bank, the depth of the water just permitting it, and Habakkuk cordially shook hands with each as he helped them out, winding up with a fervid grip of the African's huge palm.

His tongue was busy while thus engaged.

"You took me for an Injin, did you? Well, I'm pleased to hear that, for it is complimentary to my skill, for that's what I got up this rig for. I knowed what the danger was, and it struck me that if I was going to sarcumvent Injins it was a good idea to start out like one."

"Have you just arrived, Habakkuk?" asked Maggie.

"Not more than half an hour ago—you see—but let's get away from this spot, for some of them loose bullets may hit us."

This was prudent advice, for their pursuers were at that moment forcing their way through the river in pursuit.

"Gravity, you know this neighborhood better than I do—so take the lead," said the disguised patriot: "and move lively, for I begin to feel nervous."

"I kin move lively when dere's need ob it," replied the servant, "and it looks to me as if there couldn't be a better time for hurryin' dan dis identical one."

Gimp was familiar with the valley and mountains for miles around, and he threw him-

self at once in the advance, the rest following with rapid footsteps.

As they hastened toward the "Shades of Death" (and the name was never more appropriate than on that eventful night), Habakkuk McEwen explained how it was he arrived as he did.

"We fit the battle of Monmouth on the 28th of June, so you kin see I've had to travel fast to git here even as late as I did. But a lot of us heard that trouble was coming for Wyoming, and we've been uneasy for a fortnight. Three of us went to Gineral Washington and argufied the matter with him; he seemed to be worried and anxious to do all he could, and he said that Connecticut orter lend a hand, as we were her colony, but he was after the Britishers just then, and he wouldn't 'low us to go till arter the battle.

"Wal, we had a first-class battle down there at Monmouth in Jersey, and we and Molly Pitcher made the redcoats dance to the tune of 'Yankee Doodle' as they haven't danced since Saratoga and Trenton. Whew! But wasn't the day hot, and didn't the dust fly

along that road! Well, I jus' felt when we had 'em on the run, that if the Susquehanna could be turned down my throat, I would stand it for a couple of hours.

"Howsumever, just as soon as the battle was over, and I seen the Gineral had 'em, even though Gineral Lee tried to betray us, why, I just pulled out and started for Wyoming.

"I didn't wait for the other chaps either, for, somehow or other, I had the feeling strong that there wasn't an hour to spare down in these parts. I traveled hard, and after crossing the upper Delaware, I heard rumors that just made my hair stand on end.

"I knowed that the Tories and Iroquois were on their way, and when I stopped at the house of a settler only twenty miles off, I found him packing up and getting ready to move to Stroudsburg.

"I tried to persuade him to go back with me and help the folks, but he couldn't see why he should desert his own family, even though there was scarcely any danger to 'em.

"He was the man, howsumever, who sug-

gested to me that I had better fix up as an Injin, and he furnished the paint, feathers, and rig. He helped me to get inside of 'em, too, and when he was through, and showed me a glass, I acterally thought I was a Seneca warrior for the time, and, if I'd had a tomahawk, I'd been likely to have tomahawked the settler and his family.

"As it was, I jumped into the air and give out a ringin' whoop, and felt mighty savage and peart like; then I struck out for Wyoming, and I've done some tall traveling, I can tell you. Everybody that saw me took me for an Injin, and gave me a wide berth. Two men shot at me, and I was just beginning to think there might be less fun in playing Injin than appeared at first.

"Well," added the eccentric individual, "I got here too late to take part in the battle, but I'm ready to do all I can to help you out of your trouble, which looks powerful serious."

And the little band, as may well be imagined, were grateful beyond expression to find that what was first taken to be a dreaded enemy was after all a valuable friend.

CHAPTER XI.

IT caused Lieutenant Godfrey the deepest chagrin to reflect that, after his remarkable escapes of the day, he had been taken prisoner in this fashion.

He was in a crouching posture, watching the scene in front, when several Seneca warriors returning to camp discovered him, and before he could make an effective resistance, he was borne to the ground, disarmed, and made prisoner.

But chagrin was quickly lost in alarm, for there could be no doubt of the intentions of Queen Esther respecting all her captives.

It was characteristic of the youth that his first misgiving was concerning his father, who was but such a short distance behind him, and he expected every minute to see the hapless man brought in as his companion.

But as time passed, Fred gained hope for him, and, recalling his pledge, believed he would keep beyond danger.

Katharine Montour bent her gaze upon the youth, as he came in front of her escorted by several warriors, and then she broke into a chuckling laugh.

This extraordinary creature was once quite popular with civilized people, and she spoke English as well as the Seneca tongue.

"Ha, ha, ha," she added, "you're another Yankee, ain't you?"

Fred had no wish to deny the charge, but he thought best to hold his peace. If she were disposed to enter into a fair argument, he could maintain his own with her; but the relative situation of the two was that of the wolf and lamb in the fable, and, no matter what line he might take, or how skillfully he might try to conciliate her, she would only work herself into a still more furious passion.

He therefore did wisely in not making any reply, but with his hand at his side, and with a stolid, drooping, half-vacant gaze like that of the other prisoners, he looked mutely at her.

The attractive appearance of the young lieutenant, and his manly bearing when first brought before her, may have suggested to

Queen Esther that a prisoner of more consideration than usual was at her disposal.

Her exultation, therefore, was the greater, because she would gain this additional means of ministering to her thirst for vengeance.

"You Yankee officer?" she asked, peering into his handsome face.

"I am a lieutenant in the Continental army," answered Fred.

"*All* the captains were killed," was the truthful declaration of the queen, "and more of you Yankees shall be killed; do you see these here?" she asked, making a sweep with her hand toward the captives. "All of them shall die by my hands—yes, by *my* hands. Do you hear?"

Fred heard, but he did not think it wise to take the negative of the question, and he continued to hold his peace.

While the Indians were looking on with that apparent indifference which the race can so well assume under the most trying circumstances, Queen Esther suddenly whipped out from the folds of her gaudy dress a scalp, which she flourished in front of the prisoners.

Then, with many execrations, she began a weird song and dance up and down in front of them.

This shocking scene lasted but a few minutes, when other Indians came in with more prisoners, among whom Fred recognized several acquaintances. They looked sorrowfully at each other, but said nothing.

The lieutenant counted, and saw there were precisely eighteen, besides himself. It must have been that Queen Esther had stopped in this piece of woods, and, calling in a number of her Senecas, had sent them out to bring in all the captives they could.

She had now secured enough to satisfy her, and she started up the river with them.

The hapless ones walked in a straggling group together, while the Indians were on either hand in front, and the Queen at the rear, as if she wished to contemplate and enjoy the treat in prospect.

Whither they were going, Fred could only guess, but he was certain that it was to some spot where torture would be inflicted on the patriots.

The mixed company had progressed something like an eighth of a mile, when a sudden confusion occurred in the ranks, and those who looked around caught sight of a man dashing through the undergrowth with the speed of a frightened deer.

Queen Esther recognized the figure as that of the young lieutenant, and, with a shriek of rage, hurled her tomahawk, missing him only by a hair's breadth.

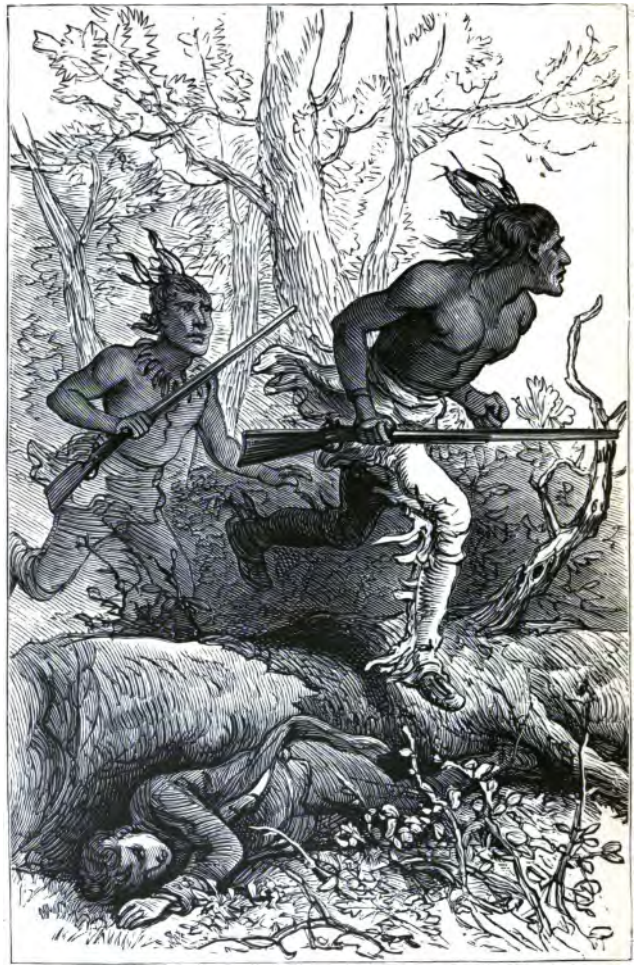
At the same moment she called upon her warriors to recapture him, and they dashed off with all speed, not needing the incentive of her command.

It may be said that in such daring breaks for life as that of Fred Godfrey, everything depends on the start. He made such a tremendous bound that he was several rods distant before his foes really understood what had taken place.

Another piece of extremely good fortune lay in the fact that the woods where this was done were quite dense, and in the approaching twilight the start gained by the fugitive actually placed him beyond their sight.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS



"The next instant, two warriors bounded over the log."

This by no means insured his escape, for his pursuers were too close on his heels, but it gave him an advantage, the importance of which cannot be overstated.

Fred, as you have been told, was fleet of foot, and he now did his utmost, but he could not hope to outrun those who were so close.

He had gone a short distance only, when he turned to the right, and threw himself down beside a fallen tree which lay across his path, and he was not a moment too soon.

The next instant, two warriors bounded over the log and vanished in the wood. As they were sure to suspect the trick that had been played, Fred did not stay where he was. He knew the Senecas would speedily return, and he could not elude such a search as they would be sure to make.

Crawling away from the friendly log, he hurried silently off in a crouching posture, and soon reached a point where he felt quite safe from detection, though he did not throw his caution aside.

As soon as he felt himself master of his movements he made his way back to the point

where he had separated from his father; but, although he cautiously signaled to him, he received no response, and he concluded that he was still in hiding somewhere in the neighborhood, and was afraid to answer the calls, if, indeed, he heard them; or he had managed to cross the Susquehanna, and was searching for the rest of his family.

In either case it was a great relief to find he had not fallen into the hands of Queen Esther, who was certain to be doubly savage, now that she had lost the prisoner whom she valued the most.

"If those captives would only made a break," said Fred, to himself, "some would get off; but, as it is, they are like dumb brutes led to the slaughter, and all will perish miserably—Heaven help them!"

CHAPTER XII.

FRED GODFREY was not altogether correct in his dismal prophecy.

Queen Esther, when she found that one of her prisoners was gone, gave expressions of fury and resumed the march up the river, her warriors keeping closer watch than before to prevent any other escape.

The procession halted near a boulder which rises about eighteen inches above the ground, and which may be seen to-day, as it lies directly east of the battle monument toward the site of burned Fort Wintermoot, on the brow of the high steep bank, which centuries ago probably marked the shore of the Susquehanna.

The eighteen prisoners were driven forward until this celebrated boulder was reached, which has been known ever since by the ominous name of "Queen Esther's Rock."

Here the captives were ranged in a circle around the stone, while the queen, with a

death-maul and hatchet, proceeded to wreak vengeance upon her victims for the death of her son, killed by a scouting party, a short time before the battle.

One after another, the white men were seated upon the rock, and held by two strong warriors, while the terrible Katharine Montour chanted a wild dirge, and, raising the death-maul in both hands, dealt the single blow that was all sufficient.

Occasionally she varied the dreadful ceremony by using a keen-edged hatchet with her muscular arm, which was as effective as the death-maul wielded by both hands.

The work went on until eleven victims had been sacrificed, when one of the men, Lebbeus Hammond, was roused by the sight of his own brother, who was placed upon the rock, and tightly grasped by two warriors.

It was impossible to do anything for him, but Lebbeus whispered to Joseph Elliott:

"*Let's try it!*"

On the instant, they wrenched themselves loose from their captors, and bounded down the river bank.

They expected to be shot, and they preferred such a death to that which awaited them if they remained.

But the very audacity of the attempt, like that of Fred Godfrey, threw the Indians into confusion for the moment, and instead of firing they broke into pursuit, without discharging a weapon.

Fortunately for the fugitives, instead of keeping together they diverged, Hammond heading up the river. The warriors must have concluded that they were making for Forty Fort, and shaped their course with the purpose of shutting them off. The fort lay to the south and below, and, understanding the aim of the Indians, Hammond turned more directly up the river.

He was fleet-footed, and ran as never before; but, while straining every nerve, he caught his foot in a root, and was thrown headlong down the bank, rolling all in a heap underneath the bushy top of a fallen tree.

He started to scramble to his feet, when, like a flash, it occurred to him that there was no safer course than to stay where he was.

Only a few seconds passed, when the Indians approached and began hunting for him. How they failed to discover the young man passes comprehension, and it was only another of the several wonderful escapes which marked the massacre of Wyoming.

The savages peered here and there, drawing the bushes aside, and looking among the old logs. The poor fellow heard their stealthy footsteps all around him, and caught glimpses of their coppery faces, smeared with paint, as they uttered some exclamation and almost stepped upon him in his concealment.

Once he was sure he was detected, and he held his breath, fearful that the throbbing of his heart would betray him; but the red men moved away, and shortly after returned to Queen Esther's Rock to help in the executions going on there.

Hammond stayed where he was until all was still, when he crept cautiously out, and, swimming the river, made his way to the fort at Wilkesbarre, where, to his amazement, he found his companion in flight.

The escape of this patriot was no less extraordinary than that of Hammond.

He had also swum the river to the bar on the lower point of Monocacy Island, going almost the entire distance under water. Whenever he threw up his head for a breath of fresh air he was fired upon, and he received a bad wound in the shoulder.

Although suffering severely from it, he persevered and soon reached the opposite side, where he found a horse wandering loose and without bridle or saddle.

With little effort Elliott succeeded in catching him, and with a bridle improvised from the bark of a hickory sapling, he rode the animal to Wilkesbarre, where the wound was dressed by a surgeon.

The next morning he went down the river with his wife and child in a canoe managed by a boy, and joined his friends at Catawissa.

Both Hammond and Elliott lived many years afterward, and are still remembered by some of the old settlers in Wyoming Valley.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN the mean time the little party consisting of Maggie and Eva Brainerd, Aunt Peggy, and the servant Gravity Gimp, and the eccentric New Englander Habakkuk McEwen, were improving to the utmost the advantage gained by reaching the eastern bank of the Susquehanna.

"I don't want to go away without papa," said Eva, as she looked longingly across the river, where the massacre was going on, as shown in the smoke of burning buildings, the crack of the rifles, the whoop of the Indians, the shouts of fugitives, and the flight of settlers, including women and children, who flocked to the river.

Despite the danger, Maggie shared with her sister the most tender solicitude for her parent.

"Perhaps he is among them," said she, in a lower voice, to Gravity.

"There's no telling where anybody is," replied the New Englander, "but I notice that the Tories and Injins right across from us are watching our movements pretty sharp, and it won't do for us to loaf about here many days, if we expect to get out with our lives."

"What a pity that Jake Golcher was not shot when we had the chance!" exclaimed Aunt Peggy.

"We're likely to get dat same chance agin," said Gimp, impressively, "and de next time de one dat don't took it has got to be shot for him."

"If we could do Richard any good," added Aunt Peggy, more thoughtfully, "we ought to wait here; but can we?"

McEwen, who was growing uneasy over this delay, shook his head.

"If anybody can show me the way by which we can help him I'm willing to stay, but the woods are full of people fleeing, and the savages are after 'em. I've no doubt a lot are in Forty Fort, where they'll be safe if they've enough to keep the Injins back. There's only one thing left for us to do, and that's to run."

He looked inquiringly at Maggie, and the brave girl, with a breaking heart, stifled her anguish and nodded her head to signify that she was ready.

As courageous as the Roman maiden of old, she could walk straight along the line of duty, even though it led over red-hot plow-shares.

Poor Eva put her hands to her face, and the tears streamed through her fingers, but she, too, had something of the high courage of her sister, and when the latter placed her arm about her and drew her head over upon her shoulder, the little girl sobbed for a few minutes only, and then cheered up and bent to her task.

"Where do you go?" asked Maggie of Habakkuk.

"I think there is an old trail leading through the mountains and wilderness to Stroudsburg, ain't there, Gimp?"

—"Dar am," was the response, "and I've been over it twice, so dat I knows de way."

"Does it lead through the 'Shades of Death?'"

"It am."

"It's a long road to Stroudsburg, for I came from out that way, and it'll be a powerful hard tramp, but I don't think we can do any better. These Iroquois have had a taste of victory, and they'll never stop, so long as there's a chance to get any more. They'll trail us all day to-morrow, and it's my opinion we ain't goin' to get to Stroudsburg in a hurry, either."

"Den let's be off," added Gravity, who could not fail to see the necessity for such promptness.

"If papa comes across the river," said Eva, who threatened to yield again; "won't he cross higher up?"

It struck all that there was some reason in this suggestion, which was acted upon without delay.

They made their way up the western shore until some distance above Monocacy Island, every eye and ear on the alert.

They saw plenty of fugitives, some on horseback, some wounded, all scared half out of their senses, and striving to get as far from the valley as possible.

Numerous neighbors and acquaintances were

encountered, but naught was seen of Mr. Brainerd, and nothing was known of Fred's presence on the other shore. He had left the Continental army directly after McEwen, who was unaware, therefore, of his coming.

It would not do to tarry any longer. The afternoon was drawing to a close, and the whoops and rifle-shots that every now and then were heard on the eastern shore proved that the little party in whom we are interested were only rendering their situation more perilous by every minute's delay.

Accordingly an abrupt turn was made to the right, and they plunged into the woods, pushing for the mountains some distance back of the river, and aiming to strike the Stroudsburg trail, after reaching the other side of the range, which is about a thousand feet in height.

As Gravity Gimp was better acquainted than any one with the wilderness, he took the lead, the ladies coming next, while Habakkuk McEwen brought up the rear—leader and rear guard each, as well as Maggie, carrying a loaded rifle, and on the alert.

"Gravity," said Eva, when they had gone

but a short distance, "I thought you were lame a while ago?"

"Wal, what ob it?"

"You don't show a bit of lameness now."

To the surprise of his friends, the African laughed heartily.

"Dat war a joke ob mine; I warn't hurt at all, but war jes pretendin'."

"Why did you do that?"

"To fool the Injuns: I war thinkin' dat if dey seed I war lame, dey would think I couldn't run, and would lebe me to scoop up arter a while, and den I'd get de start on' em. Shouldn't wonder if I done it, too."

There was no discussion of this original strategy, which possibly did prove of some benefit to the sable fugitive.

The company pressed on until they reached a point perhaps an eighth of a mile from the river, when, as by common consent, a halt was made.

No path was followed, but they had scrambled along as best they could, and now paused, where, for the time at least, they were alone.

The sun had gone down, and the question

was whether they should pause where they were for the night, or whether they should try to get through the mountainous ridge before daylight came again.

The question would not have arisen but for the anxiety concerning the missing Mr. Brainerd. The ladies, including Eva, seated themselves on the ground, while Gravity Gimp and Habakkuk McEwen perched themselves on a high, broad boulder, where they could detect the approach of danger.

"Dar's one thing dat troubles me wery muchly," said the African, with a worried expression.

"What's that?" asked Habakkuk.

"It'll take us two or free days to reach Stroudsburg, no matter how fast we trabbel, and whar's we gwine to got de prowisions on de road?"

This was a serious matter indeed, and it was one which caused many a death and much suffering among the hapless multitude that pressed through the "Shades of Death," in the direction of the settlements on the upper Delaware.

"I've got some bread and meat," said the New Englander, "which I brought from a settler's cabin thirty miles away, but I ate a big lot on the road and there ain't much left, but what there is goes to the ladies, of course."

"Dat's a wery good arrangement," said Gimp, "but I don't see dat it am gwine to do dis gemman much good."

"You'll have to do the same as I—*sh!*"

A crackling of the undergrowth startled every one, and Gravity and Habakkuk instantly slid off their rocky seats and crouched down, with their cocked guns in their hands.

"Scrooch low!" whispered the New Englander; "it must be Injins, and that's worse than having nothin' to eat."

The five did their best to screen themselves from observation, for, as has been said, the most dreaded calamity that could befall them would be their discovery by a party of their enemies, numbers of whom, it was known, had crossed the river and were scouring the woods for more victims of their cruelty.

CHAPTER XIV.

ONE of the most striking features of the massacre in Wyoming Valley, in July, 1778, was the number of extraordinary individual escapes on the part of the fleeing patriots and panic-stricken settlers. There is no episode in American history marked by so many singular, and, indeed, almost inexplainable incidents, in this respect, as was that disaster which swept over one of the fairest spots that sun ever shone upon.

In the battle there were, on the patriot side, about two hundred and thirty enrolled men, and seventy old people, boys, civil magistrates, and other volunteers, embracing six companies, which were mustered at Forty Fort, where the families from the east side of the Susquehanna had taken refuge.

A young man, slight of frame and weak of body, was chased by several Indians, one of whom was almost close enough to throw his

tomahawk. The fugitive, despite his fleetness, was losing ground, when Zebulon Butler, one of the last to leave the field, galloped by him on horseback. The fugitive caught the tail of the animal, and thus helped, made good progress. But the warriors, knowing he could not keep his hold long, continued the chase.

Sure enough, the poor fellow speedily lost his hold, and was about to give up, when he caught sight of a drunken soldier, lying in the wheat-fields. As Colonel Butler went by, he shouted to the stupid fellow to fire at the Indians. He roused up, rubbed his eyes, and pointing his wabbling musket in the direction where he supposed his pursuers to be, let fly.

The leading warrior dropped dead, and his companions, supposing there was an ambush in front, turned and ran for life, while the exhausted fugitive pitched forward on the ground and was saved. Unfortunately, however, this soldier was not the only intoxicated patriot at Wyoming on that day.

A wealthy settler, finding a party of Indians at his heels, did his utmost to throw them off his trail, but failed, and was in despair.

While still struggling forward he came upon the trunk of a large hollow tree, into which he crept. Knowing the red men would soon be along, he remained quiet for several hours, scarcely daring to move a limb.

By and by he heard footsteps, and to his consternation, several warriors actually sat down on the log itself. The murmur of their voices, as they talked together, was audible, and he saw no way by which he could escape discovery.

The opening in the log through which he had crawled was in plain sight of the Indians, who stooped down and peered in.

The fugitive saw the painted faces, as they strained their eyes to pierce the gloom, and he was certain they would detect him as soon as they became used to the darkness.

But shortly after he crawled into the refuge a spider spun his web across the opening, and the quick eye of the warriors noted it. With good reason they accepted it as a proof that no one had taken refuge there, and they accordingly left.

The fugitives, whose history we have set out

to give, crouched behind the rocks in the woods, and tremblingly listened to the approaching footsteps, that all believed were those of Indians.

The gathering twilight was already strong enough in the wilderness to hide them from the observation of any who might stray to that section, and a fight was almost certain to be the result of detection.

It was noticeable that Habakkuk McEwen took more precaution against discovery than the African, or even the ladies. He lay flat on his face, where no one could see him unless he passed directly by the spot.

He kept whispering to the others to be quiet, and to "scrooch" lower, for the Indians are proverbial for their keen sightedness.

The curiosity of the ladies got the better of their prudence, and each one peered cautiously from behind the sheltering rock. Aunt Peggy besought Maggie and Eva to keep out of sight, but all the time she was thrusting her own head forward and drawing it back again in a way that was more likely to attract

attention to herself than if she remained stationary.

"If you girls ain't more careful, some of the scand'lous villains—"

At that instant Eva Brainerd sprang to her feet with a faint scream, and, to the horror of her friends, leaped nimbly upon the rock, then down to the ground, and ran like a fawn in the direction whence came the disturbance, and where the outlines of a dark figure were dimly observed.

"Oh, it's papa! my own papa!" exclaimed the joyful girl, who was caught in the arms of her no less delighted parent, and pressed to his breast.

"Heaven be thanked!" exclaimed Mr. Brainerd, kissing and embracing the fond child again and again, and then, holding her hand in his, he fairly ran toward the bewildered fugitives, who had sprung to their feet as they recognized him.

Then the laughing, happy Maggie's white arms were thrown around her father's neck, and both cried for joy.

Mr. Brainerd was in a sorry plight. His

coat, vest, and hat were gone, and his draggling garments were dripping with river water, but it was his own genial self who stood before them. And when he released his daughter, he shook the hand of Aunt Peggy warmly, as he did that of Habakkuk McEwen, who was an old acquaintance, and at whose Indian-like disguise he laughed.

All were talking, smiling, and congratulating each other for the next few minutes, and nothing was thought of the peril incurred in giving way to their feelings at such a time, and in such a place.

But there was one still missing—the loved brother, who had gone so valiantly in search of his parent. When the latter had told his story, Maggie asked:

"Papa, where can Fred be?"

"I hope he is safe; but we cannot be sure of it for some time yet. He is a brave, noble boy. I will never cease to be grateful, if he is spared to join us."

The father, hiding his own misgivings as best he could, only said that he and his son (as he always regarded his step-son), were

108255A

compelled to separate a short time before, on the other side of the river, and since a man of his age was able to rejoin his friends, there surely must be reason to believe that one so young and active as Fred would soon show himself. So all resolved to hope, though their fears made the hope more painful than cheering.

"It won't do to stay here," said Mr. Brainerd, when told that they thought of camping where they were till morning.

"Is the danger imminent?" asked McEwen.

"The Tories and Indians are continually crossing the river, and there must be at least a hundred on this side; their whole purpose is massacre. I do not think it possible for us to escape discovery if we wait another hour."

"Then let's be off!" said Habakkuk, throwing his rifle over his shoulder, and starting in the direction of the mountains.

"Hold on!" interposed Gimp; "Ise de guide ob dis procession, and if you takes my place you'll be lost sartin sure."

"All right, go ahead!" assented the other; "only don't be so slow about it."

"Many of the poor people," explained Mr. Brainerd, as the party made ready to start, "are following the trails through the woods and mountains, and they are suffering frightfully—hark!"

As he spoke, the sharp crack of two guns was heard, so close at hand that all started and looked behind them.

Nothing however was seen, and the elder added, as they resumed their flight, "Others of our friends have done like us and left the trails, but without avoiding danger, though they may lessen it."

"But we can't tramp all the way through the woods in this fashion," protested Aunt Peggy, as she caught her foot in a root and narrowly saved herself from falling forward on her hands.

"No; after getting to the other side of the mountains we will work off to the right and strike the regular Stroudsburg trail, and keep to it until beyond the reach of the Tories and Indians."

"That's the doctrine I subscribe to," assented Habakkuk; "Mr. Brainerd, you will

take charge of the extra gun, which allows one to each man; that's three, and we ought to be able to give a good account of ourselves, though I do hope we shall get through without any more trouble."

As before, the African acted the part of guide. He had tramped through these woods so many times that it may be said he was familiar with every acre. In the preceding winter he and Mr. Brainerd had hunted deer, and both remembered a romantic spot where there was a natural cavern, not very deep, which they availed themselves of for shelter when overtaken by a driving snow-storm.

As Mr. Brainerd recalled the place he directed Gimp to conduct them thither, it being his purpose to stay there until night should fully settle upon the wilderness.

His reason for what might seem a singular step was that the sounds of firing, and the occasional whoops of Indians near at hand, convinced him that, if they attempted to go much farther while it was so light, they would be sure to come in collision with some of these savage bands, in which event it would be hardly

possible to escape the loss of several, if not all the party.

"We will take advantage of the natural fort," said he, "until it is dark, and then Gravity knows the woods so well, he can lead us through the mountains to the other side, where we need not hesitate to take the main trail to Stroudsburg."

CHAPTER XV.

"EVA, take the hand of your aunt," said Mr. Brainerd, who saw that his other daughter was desirous of saying something to him; "and let Maggie and me walk together for a few minutes."

The child would have preferred to stay by the side of her beloved parent, but she did as requested, and her elder sister slipped back, and, as the ground permitted, ran her own arm beneath her father's, and the two walked together.

"Well, Maggie, what is it?" he asked, tenderly.

The brave girl repressed her distress as best she could, but he detected the tremor in the voice which asked the question:

"Father, have you told us *all* about Fred?"

"I saw him a while ago."

"Do you know whether he is alive or—or —dead?"

"Be courageous, my child; I cannot answer that question, but I have hope that we shall see him again. He hurried home from the army to help us, but arrived too late. Reaching Monocacy Island, he became so anxious to find out what had become of me, that he returned to the battle-ground at great risk to himself. We met, providentially, and found that neither was hurt—a remarkable piece of good-fortune indeed."

"But how did you become separated?"

"We started up the river bank in the direction of Fort Wintermoot, believing we would stand a better chance of getting across without molestation, for he had learned from a fugitive that you had gotten over. Fred made me promise, while on the way, that if we became separated I should make no effort to rejoin him—that is, to help him, for he must have felt that I could do him no good. I gave the promise, and then demanded that he should make me a similar pledge—but he actually refused."

"Just like my noble brother!" exclaimed Maggie, with a glowing countenance; "well?"

"Scarcely five minutes later we approached a dense portion of the forest, in which we feared were some of the Indians. Fred had assumed the leadership before this, and he told me to stay where I was until he could go forward and learn whether it would do to pick our way through that part of the wood, or whether it was necessary to go around."

"Well? well?" asked Maggie, seeing that her father hesitated.

"My boy went forward to reconnoiter—and he didn't come back."

"O, father!" wailed Maggie, "what became of him?"

"You can guess as well as I: there were Indians in there, as I learned immediately after, and one of several things may have happened to him. He may have found himself involved in such a network of danger that he was forced to lie still, not daring to withdraw until night; he may have been compelled to go out by another route, or he——"

"May have been captured and killed."

Maggie's eyes were fixed yearningly upon

the face of her parent, as she finished his remark in a tremulous whisper.

"It may have been so," he added, gravely, "but we cannot be certain. Fred is very active, cool, self-possessed, and daring, and I shall not give up hope so long as this uncertainty exists."

Maggie Brainerd attempted to speak, but failed. The human heart at such a time reaches the limit of endurance, and she drew her shawl closer about her, though the afternoon was warm, and the exertion of traveling was great.

She had no covering on her head, but, like Eva, her wealth of luxuriant tresses, as fine as the golden floss on the ripening corn, flowed down and over her shapely shoulders.

"We are in the hands of God," said her father, reverently, as he drew his elbow closer to his side, so as to press the hand of his daughter with it; "I waited as long as I dared, and had I not made the pledge I would have gone forward to Fred's assistance."

"It was well you did not, for we would have two instead of one to mourn for."

"But where is your courage, child?" he asked, reproachfully; "is this the girl who stood up in the flat-boat and used the pole when the bullets were flying about her? Is this she who coolly raised her rifle and fired at those who were seeking her life?"

"I ought to be thankful, and I *am* thankful, for God has been tenfold more merciful to me than he has to scores of others. Our family as yet is unbroken, and, though the way is long and dark before us, we have cause to hope we shall all be saved."

"And there is equal cause to hope for the final escape of Fred," her father was quick to add.

"I will not murm anyur more," said Maggie, helping him over a boulder that obstructed their path; "we have enough on hand, without looking behind us. It may be that Fred is one of the fortunate few who shall survive to tell the dreadful story, but I feel as though we shall never see him again."

"Tut, tut, your feelings have nothing to do with it; when he rejoins us, and learns what a timid creature you were, or rather how

strongly you doubted his ability to take care of himself—you will blush to look him in the face."

"I pray that I may have the opportunity—"

"Hello!" broke in her parent, stopping suddenly, as did all the rest; "there's something wrong."

And so there was, sure enough.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHILE the fugitives were pushing their way through the wilderness, and especially after they had entered the more romantic and mountainous section, they had become somewhat separated from each other.

Gravity Gimp, the colored guide, was fully a hundred feet in advance—a piece of imprudence that should never have been permitted, while Eva came next, Aunt Peggy directly behind her, and Maggie and her father were less than a rod distant from her.

Habakkuk McEwen had disappeared!

That which caught the attention of father and daughter while they were conversing so earnestly, was a serpent-like "sh!" from the African, who, stopping instantly, turned part way round, and raised his hand in such a warning manner that the four paused, knowing he had made some alarming discovery.

Gravity remained stationary but a second

or two, when, in a stooping posture, he began moving back toward his friends.

At this juncture, and before the little party had fully noticed the absence of McEwen, he was seen approaching from the left, with such a terrified look on his painted face that his shock hair seemed to be standing on end.

He advanced much faster than the stealthy African, and he had hardly reached his friends when he exclaimed, in a husky whisper:

"*We're gone! it's all up!*"

"What do you mean?" demanded Brainerd.

"I saw four thousand Injins just now."

"Where?"

"Right out there; I believe Colonel Butler and his villain of a son Walter, and Brandt, the Mohawk chief, and Queen Esther are at their head."

This wild assertion served to lift part of the load from the listeners, but they knew the fellow must have some grounds for his terror.

Before he could explain, Gravity Gimp had a word to say.

"Dere am Injuns all about us; de wood am full ob 'em."

"Tell us the truth, that we may know what to do," commanded Mr. Brainerd, sternly, while the affrighted females gathered around.

"I war pushing along," said the servant, "when I heerd something like de call ob birds in de woods, and I begin to smell a mouse, and I walked slower like, thinking you folks war right onto my heels. All at once I seed two Injuns stealing along—"

"Did they see you?"

"No, 'cause dere backs was turned toward me, but I knowed dey war looking fur us, so I wheeled on my heel, and remarked, '*sh!*' jist to stop you from running ober me; as I done so, de Injuns wanished in de wood, but you can make up your mind dey'll be back agin mighty soon."

"And what was it that *you* saw, Habakkuk?"

"I guess it must have been the same savages," replied McEwen, who had begun to regain something of his self-possession.

"Didn't you see any more?"

"No. But when you find two red men, you can feel sartin thar's a big lot more at hand; they're the same as rattlesnakes, in that respect."

"It's not so bad as I thought, but the case is bad enough. Gravity, how far off is that place in the rocks we're hunting for?"

"Reckon it can't be fur away now."

"We must make all haste to it, then. The Indians seem to be, so far as we know, on our right, and you must bear off to the left, so as to avoid them, if we can."

"Hold on," interrupted McEwen. "Gimp seen two Injins, didn't he?"

"Dat's de fac'," replied the negro.

"I seen the same number, but in addition, I had a fair glimpse of a white man, too."

"Did you recognize him?"

"I did. He was Jake Golcher, the Tory."

"Oh, the scand'lous villain!" exclaimed Aunt Peggy. "I'll get my hands on him yet, and the next time, I'll shake the life out of him."

Mr. Brainerd had heard the story of this man's doings, a comparatively short time

before, and he needed no other proof that he had brought a horde across the Susquehanna for the purpose of wreaking vengeance upon his family.

He knew that the Tory, who was more guilty than the fiercest of the Iroquois, was a discarded suitor of his daughter, and he was to be dreaded all the more on that account.

"Quick," said Mr. Brainerd, addressing his servant; "we haven't a second to spare; bear off to the left, as I told you, and don't let the grass grow under your feet."

It need not be said that no one of them lagged. The very peril from which they were fleeing was almost upon them.

CHAPTER XVII.

THERE was no attempt to use caution or care in hurrying forward. Somehow or other Jake Golcher had gotten on the track of the little party, and, with a number of Seneca warriors, almost as keen of eye and scent as bloodhounds, was following them.

Fortunately, the distance to the cave was not great, and the fugitives were walking fast, and in the right direction.

The heavy figure of Gravity Gimp kept its place at the front, and with a coolness scarcely to be expected, he looked to the right and left as he advanced, with the sole purpose of preventing any precious moments being lost by going astray.

All heard the bird-calls, whistling, and faint whoops uttered with very little intermission, from different portions of the wood, so that it was certain the Tories and Indians knew of the flight, and were in sharp pursuit.

The African, as we have said, maintained his place well in advance, though at times it looked as if Habakkuk would take the lead. But both scrambled along, sometimes half falling over the stones which turned beneath their tread, or the briers and vines that almost threw them on their faces.

Gravity could not afford time to look to his feet, to see where he placed the rather unwilling members, for it required all his training, as a hunter, to keep his reckoning and to make sure he was taking the most direct route to the sheltering cave, upon which all hopes were now fixed.

Although McEwen had come a long distance to help repel the invasion of the Wyoming Valley, he was accustomed to fight where there was plenty of support, and he knew enough of aboriginal ferocity to dread the collision that now impended.

Had he known, therefore, the right course to follow, he would have been in advance of the others ; but as it was, he fretted because he was forced to keep on the flank of the negro, whom he was continually urging to greater speed.

"As sure as a gun," he said, "those fleet-footed redskins will gobble us up in five minutes, if you don't get up more speed than that, Gravity."

"I can't conwerse while I'm tumbling over rocks and splitting 'em to pieces wid my head," was the reply. "Don't bodder me, but look out for Injuns, and if you see one, just run up to him and lamm him."

"Lamm him!" muttered Habakkuk, more to himself than his companion. "That shows the intelligence of his race. He's so dumb at times that he crosses the line, and does smart things."

Aunt Peggy was not far in the rear of the two, for she was much lighter of foot than they. She got along very well, but she held her lips compressed, and her small eyes flashed, when she reflected that the whole party were fleeing from the wrath of a man who had lived in the valley before the war, who had sat at Mr. Brainerd's table many a time, and had presumed, even, to pay court to pretty Maggie.

It was an exasperating thought, indeed, that

all this persecution was for no cause at all, excepting the depravity of the Tories, who, being renegades, were more revengeful than they would have been against a foreign enemy.

Mr. Brainerd compelled his two daughters to continue in advance of him, though only for a short distance. He expected the appearance of the pursuers, and he could not leave the fugitives unguarded in that fashion.

He felt that it was the place of Habakkuk McEwen to keep him company, and he called to him in a guarded voice. But the fleeing New Englander either did not, or would not, hear him.

It was impossible for such a flight and pursuit as this to last for any length of time. The advantage was all on the side of the fleet-footed Indians, who were so familiar with the woods that they were sure to come up with the patriots in a brief while.

The fugitives were hurrying forward, as we have described, when they were startled by the whoop of an Indian directly behind

them, and so close that every one glanced over his shoulder.

As they did so they saw the figure of a Seneca warrior in full view and on a rapid run.

It was seen, too, that he grasped a gun in one hand and his tomahawk in the other. There could be little doubt that he meant to use one of them on the old gentleman at the rear, who could not hold his own against such a swift pursuer.

"S'render! s'render! s'render!" called the savage, as he gained rapidly, uttering the command in such good English that no one could misunderstand him.

"S'render! s'render!—me shoot—"

Mr. Brainerd halted, turned quickly, raising his rifle while in the very act of doing so, and when the affrighted but bewildered Indian ran almost against the muzzle of his gun, the trigger was pressed.

The red man, with an ear-splitting shriek, bounded in the air and stopped pursuing the patriots, while Mr. Brainerd, as he hurriedly resumed his flight, was so overcome with excitement as to mutter:

"Now you can shoot and be— !"

"The accusing spirit flew up to heaven's chancery with the oath, and as she wrote it down, dropped a tear on the word, and blotted it out forever."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE crack of Richard Brainerd's rifle and the death-shriek of the Seneca Indian were almost simultaneous, but the redskin was only a slight way in advance of the other savages, who, understanding the meaning of the report and outcry, dashed forward.

The startling episode caused some bewilderment on the part of the other fugitives, seeing which, the eldest called out to them impatiently:

"Push on, there! Push on! the Indians are right on us."

Providentially, the advance were so close to the refuge that Gravity Gimp caught sight of the spot, and without looking around, he swung his hand over his head and exclaimed:

"Here we am! Here we am!"

"And that's the trouble," growled Habakkuk McEwen, crowding hard after him, "if we

were only somewhere else, we'd feel a good deal better—leastways I would."

Another whoop was heard, then others at the rear, and those who glanced back caught sight of several warriors flitting among the trees and within the toss of a stone of them.

Brainerd would have fired again had it been in his power, but his gun was unloaded and it was impossible to ram a charge home, and pour the powder in the pan, without coming to a standstill for a minute or two, and such hesitation would be death.

Had the place of refuge toward which they were hastening been a dozen rods farther, not one of the fugitives would have reached it alive, but, at the critical moment, Gimp, the African, told the joyous news that it was at hand, and a general scramble followed.

The servant paused at the head of the elevated path, and turning around, beckoned excitedly for the others to hurry, when they were already doing their utmost, while he danced about and waited the few seconds necessary for them to reach him.

While he was doing so, Habakkuk McEwen

suddenly vanished from sight, evidently concluding that the "time for disappearing" had come.

He had caught sight of the refuge, and with one bound he went down the declivity and was first to enter.

He took a sweeping glance of the interior, and was disappointed, for it was not what he expected, but it was far better than the open wilderness. He dashed for the narrow path on the outside, to take his part in yelling for the others to hurry up, or rather down.

"Be quick! Quick!"

It was Aunt Peggy who came panting into the opening with a rush, and, colliding with McEwen, sent him tumbling backwards.

By the time the bewildered New Englander was on his feet again, Maggie Brainerd, Eva, her father, and Gravity Gimp came crowding into the narrow place, all nearly out of breath.

There was a general looking around in the semi-gloom, and Habakkuk's disappointment was shared by those who had not seen the place before.

It was of little account, and, although it might be made to answer as a temporary refuge, it could hardly be expected to furnish secure defense for an extended time.

Descending a narrow path for twenty feet, and all the time along the face of the ravine, as it may be called, they reached a spot which looked as if it had been scooped out of the solid stone wall.

It ran back a dozen feet or more, and was about the same breadth and height, but the difficulty was that the opening was fully as great, so that, viewed from the front, the person or animal who might seek shelter there was in plain sight.

The spot was one of the many romantic ones that abound in the mountains fringing the Wyoming Valley. The rapidly sloping path that the fugitives followed terminated in front of the cave, which, therefore, could only be approached from the single direction. Beyond, the path narrowed off to nothing, leaving a perpendicular wall of stone for twenty feet below, and almost as much overhead.

The ravine on which this bordered was fifty

feet across, but directly opposite was the weak point of the defense.

A mass of rocks rose fully as high, if not a few feet higher, than the cavern in which the fugitives had taken refuge; consequently, if an enemy could gain a position behind these boulders, he could fire down into the opening, where our friends had no means of protecting themselves from the shots.

But it was no easy matter to reach this monument-like pile, though it could be done at much risk to the one attempting it. The configuration was so peculiar that one man at a time could creep along behind the other stones, until a point was almost reached which commanded the retreat, though the inmates, by pressing close against one side of the cavern, could escape the fire of an enemy.

On the other side there was no means of approach to such a position.

If a foe would climb up the rocks, and steal forward to a certain point, an active Indian could make a leap that would carry him to the cover of the pile, where he could aim

and shoot into the cavern without risk to himself, provided he used ordinary caution.

Furthermore, it was unlikely that the Indians, skilled as they were in woodcraft, would fail to see this vulnerable point and their own coigne of vantage.

In truth they detected it almost on the same instant the fugitives hurried into the cavern.

CHAPTER XIX.

FORTUNATELY both Gravity Gimp and Mr. Brainerd knew the peculiar construction of their refuge, and instant precautions were taken.

"Keep back as far as you can," said the elder, "and stay close to the wall on the right."

His order was obeyed, Habakkuk McEwen and the African both moving in that direction.

"You come too, papa," insisted Eva, catching hold of the arm of her father, who smilingly took a step or two.

"Yes," added Maggie, "if we all place ourselves beyond reach, why should not *you* do the same?"

He explained the situation.

"If the Indians get to that mass of rocks opposite, they can shelter themselves and shoot into the cavern until there is not one of us left."

"But is it necessary for you to stay out there, and draw their fire to keep them away from us?"

"Not exactly, but we must see that they do not creep to the spot; before doing so, they must pass under our aim, and it will require no great marksmanship to prevent them."

Thereupon, directing Gravity and Habakkuk to keep strict watch upon the place, with their rifles cocked, Mr. Brainerd deliberately reloaded his gun, and shifting his position so as to screen himself from the bullets that were certain to be sent into the place, he sat like a cat watching for a rat to come out of its hole.

The fugitives talked in low tones, for there was something in the uncertainty that was impressive.

Now that they were removed from imminent danger, they could breathe with some satisfaction, though sobered by their peril.

"It's all that Jake Golcher's doings," said Aunt Peggy, who was at the extreme rear of the cavern, with one arm around the neck of Eva and the other inclosing that of Maggie.

"I shouldn't wonder if you are right," replied Maggie; "he must be a wicked man indeed."

"Umph!" exclaimed the maiden, with a sniff, "there ain't a more scand'lous villain that ever drawed the breath of life, and I know what I'm saying, and jus' to think, you had a chance and didn't shoot him."

"But, aunty—"

"Shet up, don't interrupt me," broke in the relative, with a vigorous shake of the arm inclosing the neck of Maggie.

"How many times have I told you not to interrupt me when I am talking? Don't you know what's good manners?"

"But, aunty," said Maggie, softly, "I don't see how I can talk at *any* time without interrupting you."

Eva giggled, but fortunately Aunt Peggy did not catch the full meaning of the demure remark, and she said, rather sharply:

"It's easy enough to tell when I'm talking by just listening, and when I'm talking you must keep still; but I want you to remem-

ber that that piece of burglary on your part has got to be settled."

"What do you mean, aunty?"

"I told you you deserved your ears cuffed, and when we get to a place where I can do it with some comfort to myself, I am going to cuff them, *that* you can depend on."

There could be no question about the earnestness of these words, and Maggie, like an obedient child, said nothing, glad to await the time when her aunt should punish her for sparing the wretch who was now trying to hound them to their death.

"I don't know but that I deserve it," said the niece to herself, and we may as well confess that we are inclined to agree with the views of the aunt.

"Oh, that Jake Golcher," she added, with a shiver, "I'd like to get a chance at him!"

And just then she would have made it uncomfortable for the Tory, had he been within reach.

The truth was, Golcher was one of the worst of the invaders of Wyoming Valley.

Like many others, he joined a horde of Indians in attacking his former neighbors.

As we have intimated, he had sat at the same table with the Brainerds—he had been given money by Mr. Brainerd himself, for he was a shiftless scamp, hating work like a veritable tramp, and he had never received an unkind word from the charitable head of the household, who sheltered him many a time when no one else would give him room.

With the egotism of his nature, he had ventured to pay court to young Maggie Brainerd, who could scarcely credit his effrontery until he made a direct proposal of marriage.

Even then, the high-spirited girl was so touched with compassion for the man, that she refused him with all the kindness of her nature —showing a feeling, indeed, that would have won the respect of any person claiming to be a man.

But he stumped off muttering vengeance, and here he was, less then a year later, with a company of red men, seeking the lives of his former friends.

Among those who figured in the war of the

Revolution, there were none so utterly inexcusable as the Tories, who, like all renegades, were more bitter in the warfare they made upon the American colonies, than were what might be termed our natural enemies.

But for the Jake Golcher named, it may be doubted whether the little band of fugitives would have suffered serious disturbance after fording and swimming the Susquehanna.

There was enough on the western bank to keep the foe occupied all that night and the succeeding day, without crossing to the wilderness to hunt for victims.

CHAPTER XX.

THE days are long during the season of the year of which we are writing, it being scarcely dark at the hour of eight o'clock.

Although at the time the little band of fugitives entered the cavern the sun was low in the west, and something like twilight pervaded the romantic scene, yet a full hour of light remained before night would settle on the forest and river.

The evening that was approaching was partly moonlight, and the sky was without any vapor, excepting a few clouds in the east, so that it would not be entirely dark, but in the woods the gloom promised to be all that could be desired.

No doubt the Indians had been quick to detect the vulnerable point, and before long some of them would try to steal up behind the pile of rocks which gave command of the fugitives.

For that reason Mr. Brainerd stood with cocked rifle, and with his eye on the point where such approach must be made, while Habakkuk and Gimp were watching with scarcely less intentness, knowing as they did that the attainment of the station by a single Seneca would render the position of the fugitives "untenable," as the expression goes; that is to say, that same single warrior would be able to load and fire his rifle in absolute safety to himself, while he picked off every man and woman in the hollowed-out portion of the rocks.

Mr. Brainerd impressed this fact on the other two men, and, at his suggestion, they helped guard the point.

"It won't do for all of us to fire simultaneously," he said, "for then nothing could prevent the Indians charging across, and before we knew it, the whole place would be swarming with them."

"How will we know which is to fire?" asked Habakkuk.

"I'll take the first, Gravity the second, and you the third; they are not likely to make a

rush, though, if they did, they would be certain to succeed after losing one or two of their number."

"Won't they take that view any way?" asked the New Englander, who felt anything but easy in mind.

"I don't apprehend there will be a combined attempt until after dark. All Indians are cowards, and the certainty that the first one or two in such a rush are sure to be picked off is likely to keep the whole party back, and compel them to try some other plan."

"What will that be?"

"I think they will steal up as near as it is safe, and then, after reconnoitering for a time, attempt to get over to the rocks without detection. The worst of the whole business is," added Mr. Brainerd, with an anxious sigh, "that a single marksman over there will do as much injury as a dozen, though he may be longer about it."

"Suppose he does get there?"

"But he *mustn't*," was the quiet answer.

"But suppose he *does*, what then?"

Mr. Brainerd was silent for a moment.

"Then I shall have to send Habakkuk in one direction and Gravity in another, to dislodge the Indian before he can shoot."

"My gracious!" muttered McEwen, "that would be sure death to all concerned."

"The chances *would* be against you—that's a fact, but that would be preferable to huddling in this place and allowing the redskins to pick us off, one after another, without being able to raise a finger in defense."

"The state of affairs isn't calculated to raise hilarious laughter on our part," was the doleful remark of Habakkuk McEwen.

"Therefore, you see how important it is that we should prevent the Indians getting such advantage over us."

There could be no questioning this fact, and the other two renewed their watch, like men who knew the need of vigilance.

"I say," remarked the African, as though a new idea had flashed upon him, "why don't the warmints wait till it is dark before dey take a pop at us?"

"Very likely they will—but it won't do to discount any such probability."

"Dat's de opinion ob de undersigned," said Gimp, with a sigh, only dimly suspecting the meaning of the words.

"It's *my* opinion," said Habakkuk, a minute later, "that they won't wait till dark unless they find they've got to do so."

"Explain."

"They will venture on something like a rackynoissance, just as Gineral Washington does before a battle—and if it looks as though there was a show to do something, they'll try it. If they find there isn't, they'll wait till dark."

"You are quite right."

The New Englander scratched his head in perplexity.

"Well, I don't see where we are going to make anything by such a course, for when night comes they will have us foul, in spite of all we can do."

"We will be at a great disadvantage, but not hopelessly so."

"I don't see why we won't, for what will they want better than darkness to help them over?"

"There will be some light to-night, and it requires very little to show every portion of the upper part of the rocks—enough light, indeed, to demand only a little closer attention on our part. That pile of rocks there is something like the 'Umbrella Tree,' over on the top of the western mountains: it stands out in such relief, that we cannot fail to detect any movement near it."

"Can't they climb up in the rear of them, so as to avoid showing themselves to us?"

"It is impossible," replied Mr. Brainerd, who had investigated the matter only a brief while before, "that is, the thing is out of the question for the present. If we were to be besieged for several days, they would then find the means, if they had to send across the river to get it."

"And what's to hinder them keeping us here for a week?"

Mr. Brainerd shook his head, though it was hard for him to tell precisely why he was so positive on that point.

"I don't see why they can't do it," added

the New Englander; "and then what would we do for water?"

"And for somefin to eat," interjected Gravity, with a shudder, for he was already very hungry: "I say, Haberkick, we orter to have all we kin to forterfy us agin such a thing, and, derfore, it's my belief dat we orter swaller dat bread without delay."

"And it's my belief that you won't do any such thing," said Mr. Brainerd, who knew the value of even such a small quantity of nourishment, in view of the long march they expected to make through the wilderness to Stroudsburg.

"Any way you can fix it," pursued McEwen, "it's sartin we're going to have a mighty hot time— "

At that very moment, before his words were finished, the whip-like crack of an Indian rifle was heard, and all three who were looking out over the ravine caught the red flash of a gun from the extreme left of the opposite side— the point from which the fugitives could protect themselves, though it was the most dan-

gerous spot, with the exception of the pile of rocks directly opposite.

"I'm hit and done for!" exclaimed Habakkuk McEwen, as he gave a convulsive start and threw himself backward.

Naturally enough all were terrified, and Aunt Peggy uttered a scream as Maggie sprang forward to the assistance of the wounded man.

Mr. Brainerd was shocked, but he did not lose his presence of mind, and, cautioning them to stay as far back as they could, to escape drawing another shot, he remained at his post, bending low and keeping close to the wall, while he watched the point across the ravine with catlike closeness.

"Are you badly hurt?" asked Maggie, with the natural tenderness of her nature.

"Oh, I'm done for, dear Maggie; I hoped I should be able to live for *your* sake—but it seems not."

This was rather startling, but, under the alarming circumstances, much was to be overlooked.

"I hope you are not so seriously hurt as all

that," ventured Aunt Peggy, whose sympathy for the man led her to disregard her own safety, for she placed herself close to him, and necessarily in the same spot where he stood when he fell.

"Oh, go away," persisted Habakkuk, "I don't want anybody near me but Maggie; take my hand, dear, and let me—"

"See h'ar, dat's enough ob dat," broke in Gravity. "You ain't hurt any more dan I am; dere's de bullet, and it nebber touched ye."

As he spoke, he picked up a piece of lead, jagged and flattened, which had struck the rocky wall directly over the shoulder of Habakkuk, without so much as scratching his skin.

The New Englander stared at the battered lead held over his face by the grinning African; then he clapped his hand to his breast, where he supposed he was hurt, came suddenly to a sitting position, scrambled to his feet, and picking up his gun, exclaimed:

"I should like to see the chap that fired

that shot, for its just as bad to scare a fellow to death as to shoot him."

Despite the gravity of the situation, a general smile went round the little party, and even Mr. Brainerd himself, who was closely watching for the appearance of the warrior, preparatory to his leap over the narrow chasm, turned his head with a light laugh and said:

"There's enough likelihood of being struck without making any mistake about it."

Gravity Gimp sat down on the flinty floor, and leaning back, opened his mouth tremendously, and laughed till he shook all over.

Habakkuk glowered on him and said:

"If you'll only keep that mouth open in that style, it will catch all the bullets that can be fired into the cavern."

At that, Gravity spread his great jaws farther apart, until there seemed danger of their absorbing his ears.

"Yah, yah, dat's de fust time I ever knowed a man killed by a bullet dat nebber touched him."

Maggie Brainerd bit her lips, while Aunt Peggy gave her usual sniff and said:

"It's the easiest thing in the world for some folks to make fools of themselves without knowing it."

McEwen sought to divert the ridicule of his friends by his assiduous attention to matters outside.

Stationing himself close to Mr. Brainerd, who was lying on his face with his rifle cocked and extended in front, he also raised the hammer of his gun and whispered:

"Sh! I thought I saw an Injin's top-knot then!"

"Look out he doesn't shoot you wid it," laughed Gimp. "Dere's no tellin' what dey'll fire wid, and—"

"That's enough of that," interposed Mr. Brainerd, sternly. "This is no time for mirth. There *are* Indians out there, and I saw the head of one but a second ago."

"What did I tell you?" demanded Habakkuk. "You won't feel like laughing a few minutes from now."

At this moment perfect silence fell on all,

for they saw that Mr. Brainerd had discovered something unusual and alarming.

More than that, he was taking deliberate aim at some object, only pausing long enough to make sure that when he fired the ball should not miss.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE finger of Mr. Brainerd was pressing the trigger, and the hammer with its cumbrous flint was on the very eve of descending, when he suddenly released the pressure, and gave utterance to a peculiar half-chuckle. Those who were gazing along the line of direction indicated by the gleaming rifle-barrel, saw at the point where the Seneca was expected to appear, something which looked very much like the forerunner of that interesting person.

It was the top-knot and crown of an Indian, with several gaudy feathers projecting slightly beyond the wall of rock, the appearance suggesting that he was gathering himself for a spring.

This was the belief of the patriot, and, confident that at such a short distance he could not miss, he was about to fire, when there came a flash of suspicion that a sharp, but by

no means original, trick was being tried on him.

The action was not precisely that of a real Indian while trying to peer around a dangerous point, and most probably was intended to draw the fire of the sentinel.

As soon as the bullet should leave the ready rifle, the waiting warrior would either leap or run the few intervening feet, and reach the vantage-ground before the other two rifles in the company could be aimed and fired.

"Why don't you shoot?" whispered Habakkuk, "you've got him dead sure."

"*That isn't an Indian*," was the response, "but there will be one in sight pretty soon. All of you keep well back out of the way, where there is no danger of being hit, and leave this fellow to me."

The situation of the settler was trying. Lying flat on his face, with his gun cocked and pointed toward a certain spot, he watched with such intensity that in the fading light his sight threatened to fail him. Odd, flickering figures danced before him, and sometimes rock, wood, and sky were so jumbled

together, that he had to glance in another direction, until he could recover his visual strength.

The wily Seneca, having failed to draw his shot, was now likely to attempt some other stratagem.

Furthermore, the massacre of Wyoming was still going on, and this formidable body had not the patience to shut themselves out from their share in it.

In one sense it was tying themselves up to remain for hours, besieging a little company of fugitives, and, therefore, they were likely to display less indifference to the passage of time than is the rule with their race.

Such was the conclusion of Mr. Brainerd, and we may as well say he was correct.

All at once the figure of an Indian warrior was seen against the sky, and the next instant he made a leap like a panther, his fine athletic form with his legs and arms gathered being seen for an instant apparently poised in mid-air, as he made his swift bound for the point behind the column of rocks, wh.ch, once secured, placed the life of every one of the patriots at his mercy.

But, while the lithe Seneca hung thus, for one moment, between heaven and earth, he emitted a screech, his limbs were thrown out convulsively, and, striking the point at which he aimed, he rebounded like a ball, and went tumbling to the bottom.

Mr. Brainerd had fired at the very crisis, and his aim was unerring.

"Let me have your gun," said he, reaching for the weapon in the hand of McEwen, while he kept watch of the point where the Seneca had appeared and disappeared with such suddenness.

The New Englander passed the rifle to the settler, saying:

"It won't fail you."

"Please reload mine."

Habakkuk did as requested, and they exchanged weapons again.

The supposition of Mr. Brainerd was, that the shot he had fired would keep the Indians at bay for a considerable while, though he knew better than to trust to any such probability.

The gun that had served him so well was in

his grasp again, and a feeling of self-confidence came with it.

Much less time had passed since the disaster to the patriots on the other side the Susquehanna than would be supposed; but, while the settler lay stretched out on the rock, watching for the second Indian, he became aware that he was watching by the aid of moonlight and starlight alone.

It was all the harder to keep close guard, but it was indispensable, and he doubted not that when he pulled trigger a second time another Seneca would take a header down the ravine.

Some fifteen minutes passed, when Mr. Brainerd either saw, or fancied he saw, a precisely similar fluttering movement as preceded the leap of him who fell a victim to his marksmanship.

He held his gun pointed, the hammer raised, and his finger on the trigger, ready to fire the second it should become necessary.

He was not kept waiting; sooner than he anticipated, the crouching figure shot out into the air, as if propelled from a catapult, and,

with the same remarkable aim, the patriot pulled the trigger at the moment the warrior was at the arch of the brief parabola.

But, to his consternation, the powder flashed in the pan, and no discharge followed the dull click of the flint.

CHAPTER XXII.

WITH the body of the Seneca covered by the rifle of Mr. Brainerd the latter pulled the trigger, at the very moment the body was in mid-air, but the gun was undischarged.

Habakkuk McEwen, in his flurry, had rammed down the bullet first, and the weapon was useless until the ball was extracted.

Where the elder had shown such vigilance, it was singular that he had forgotten to take a very simple precaution—he should have had the African or New Englander covering the same point, and arranged that one should fire with him.

The intervening space was so brief there was no excuse for missing, and such a catastrophe could have been averted.

But though Mr. Brainerd's piece failed him, the second Indian emitted the same shriek, and went sprawling to the bottom, shot directly through the body.

"What the mischief have you done with my gun?" demanded Mr. Brainerd, flinging the weapon behind him; "let me have the one in your hand; there's something wrong with mine; draw out the charge and fix it."

"My gracious!" exclaimed the astounded Gimp, "what does *dat* mean?"

"What does *what* mean?"

"Why did dat Injin turn back summersets, and whoop it up in dat style, when your gun flashed in de pan?"

"*Somebody* shot him."

"But who was he?"

Mr. Brainerd made no reply, for he had none to make. Some unknown friend had fired the second shot, that prevented the warrior obtaining a foothold where it would have been fatal to the whites.

As to the identity of the friend, that could not be guessed.

The explanation upon which all agreed was, that some other settlers—one or more—had taken shelter somewhere in the vicinity, and had fired, either as a matter of self-protection, or for the benefit of those in the cavern.

Precisely how it should become necessary for some one to shoot the warrior, as a means of defense, was more than could be explained.

Another strange fact about it was, that Maggie Brainerd and Aunt Peggy insisted that, instead of being discharged from some point beyond and on the other side of the rocks, the marksman was perched directly over the heads of those in the cavern.

Where there were so many boulders and trees, the short echoes might well produce confusion, but the two ladies were positive that the man was immediately above them.

Gravity Gimp was inclined to the same opinion, and Mr. Brainerd was puzzled more than ever.

"I not only heard the gun," said Maggie, with great positiveness, "but I heard the man himself moving up there."

"That is impossible, my daughter," protested her father, feeling it had now become safe, for the first time, to relax his vigilance.

"Not at all," she replied, "you can hear plainly through a solid substance, and I

caught a sound made by that man's shoe scraping over the rocks."

It was scarcely credible, and yet, knowing Maggie for the clear-headed girl that she was, her father could not doubt her assertion.

It was a vast relief to discover they had such an ally so close at hand, though there remained the element of doubt as to how much further his help would extend.

Twilight was ended at last, and the solemn night brooded over the scene.

"Better to be shot to the death here where we are," was the thought of Mr. Brainerd, "than to fall into their hands, and such shall be our fate, if it comes to a choice between the two."

But for all that, the conviction was strong upon him that the only possible hope for him and his dear ones was to get them all out of that place, and well on the way through the "Shades of Death," before the rising of the morrow's sun.

They could not leave during the daytime, when, under the full glare of the noonday sun, and with such leisure at their command, the

Indians would find some way of intrenching themselves behind the column of rocks, without being exposed to the fire of the sentinel or sentinels, as the case might be.

Besides this, it was hardly to be expected that the unknown friend would be able to hold his own position in the daytime.

But how to leave the spot was the all-important question.

It would not do to move up the path by the way they came, for, even with the protecting shadow, they would be seen and would walk into the web, like so many flies.

As the path ended at the front of the cavern, no progress could be made in that direction, but the patriot believed that by picking his way down the rocks to the bottom of the ravine, as he was certain could be done, some new route might be opened.

It was necessary, however, to make a reconnoissance before venturing forth. Who was the right person to do it?

Beyond question, Habakkuk McEwen was the man.

"See here," said Mr. Brainerd, coming to

the point at once, as was his custom, "it may as well be understood that if we remain until the sun rises there will be no hope of our ever getting away."

Perfect silence followed this remark, and waiting only long enough for it to produce its effect, he added:

"Some one must steal out of the cavern, and learn whether any path is open by which we can get away. I would not hesitate to go, but our safety depends on guarding this point, where one of them may appear. Gravity is too slow, and I must therefore request you, Habakkuk, to act as our scout."

"Well, well!" exclaimed the startled man. "It'll never do for *me* to go down among the Injins."

"You needn't go down among them—but are to make sure whether there is a chance for us to steal away, under the protection of the shadow which now incloses us."

"I'd like to oblige you, but it won't do—why," he added, starting up with the idea, "it always makes me dizzy to go prowling around in the moonlight. I'd be sure to fall over the

rocks and break my leg, and then how would you feel?"

"Sorry because it wasn't your neck," retorted Mr. Brainerd, who concluded that the man was not such a re-enforcement after all, as he appeared from his own account to be; "your presence with us is an incumbrance, and I should be highly gratified if you would depart and never show yourself again. I will go myself."

He called to Gravity to take his place as sentinel, with his gun pointed out where the foe was likely to appear, but Eva, Maggie, and Aunt Peggy would not permit any such course.

The father had gone to the verge of endurance during the day. He was past fifty, quite bulky in figure, and about the only qualification he possessed for the self-appointed task, was his courage.

The three compelled the old gentleman to yield, and Maggie, with the shrewdness natural to her sex, turned to Habakkuk, who was standing at one side, and laying her pretty hand on his shoulder, said:

"Habakkuk, you think a good deal of me, don't you?"

He held off a second or so, while she turned her winsome face up to his in the gloom. He meant to sulk and compel her to coax him, but his heart gave a big jump at the touch of that hand, and, when he was able to see very faintly that countenance so close to his own, it was more than he or any sensible person could stand.

His face suddenly expanded into an all-embracing grin, and he made answer:

"Think a good deal of you, Maggie, you dear, sweet, angelic angel. Why, I worship the ground you walk on; all I came here for was to see you. I don't care a blamed cent for the others."

"If you think so much of me, then, won't you take some risk for my sake, as well as that of the others?"

"Of course I will; it will delight me—"

"Then do as father requested you."

"And go prowling outside among the Indians and Tories?"

"Of course."

"I'll be hanged if I will!" was the response, as Habakkuk stepped back; "a chap hain't got but one life, and if I should lose that, what good would I ever be to myself or any one else? You wouldn't be able to become my bride."

"But it will be dangerous to stay here, and if you go out and be careful it may be the means of saving us all."

"I tell you, dear Maggie, I would do so if it wasn't because I know I would become dizzy; it would be sure to come on me; I feel it coming on me now — there! catch me— hold me—"

He staggered toward her, throwing out his arms, and trying to measure the distance so as to fling his grasp about her, but she stepped back, and he went to the ground.

"Keep away from me!" she said, disdainfully; "if there is any creature in this world which I despise, it is that person who speaks a falsehood to escape duty."

"You'll be sorry for this some day, dear Maggie."

She stamped her foot so angrily, and her

father showed such a disposition to interfere, that he checked himself.

"I don't see why I ain't de gemman after all dat's to do dis thing," said Gravity.

Habakkuk McEwen slapped him on his broad shoulder.

"The idee exactly! one reason why I thought best to decline—though I didn't say so—was through the fear of hurting your feelings, Gravity—"

"Dat needn't trouble you; you kin go now, and I won't feel slighted."

"You've an advantage over us all, for you're so black that wherever you go you will carry the darkness with you, and the Injins will see nothing but so much shadow gliding along."

"Dat may all be, but s'pose dey should take a notion to fling their tomahawks into de shadder, what will become ob *dis* person?"

"If you are careful, you won't be hurt; if it wasn't for my weakness of dizziness, I would jump at the chance—"

"If I hear any more such stuff," interrupted Mr. Brainerd, "I'll pitch you neck and heels out of here."

"Then I guess you won't hear any more," was the prudent thought of Habakkuk.

As the African was so willing to go, it was decided to permit him to make the attempt.

The head of the party based little hope on the venture of his servant, and indeed doubted whether they would ever see him again, but, for that matter, there was little choice between the situation of any one or two of them.

Calling Gravity to him, his employer said:

"You show a great deal more courage and manliness than most of your acquaintances give you credit for. I can only tell you to do your best, as you always do."

"How shall I got away widout being seed?"

"That's the trouble, but you know this side of the ravine is in deep shadow, and I think if you move slowly up the footpath we followed in coming here, you won't be seen."

"Dat's jis what I'll do, den—good-bye." And before any one suspected it, the African was gone.

As the faithful fellow was running such risk, Mr. Brainerd crept forward, and with some danger to himself thrust his head and

shoulders out, so as to watch the actions of his servant.

Gimp assumed a crouching posture, and began moving up the narrow, sloping path like the shadow that creeps over the face of the dial.

"I wonder whether it is possible to see him," the elder one asked himself, with a pang of fear, as he looked across the brief intervening space; "it hardly seems credible that they would leave the door wide open in that manner."

But speculation was useless: Gimp was outside the cavern, and if really detected by the watchful red men, he was beyond help.

Mr. Brainerd could hear the rustling of the African's body as he slowly glided along, often loosening the dirt and gravel with his hands and knees, and sending it rolling down toward the mouth of the cavern, but there came no sign from the rocks beyond, where it was believed the main body of their enemies was gathered.

Like a huge turtle the bulky negro climbed the steep path, until his outlines were lost in

the gloom as he neared the top, and his master drew back into the cavern and wondered what it could mean.

If a man could walk from the cavern in that fashion, why might not the entire party, one after the other, file out in the same manner?

This was a natural question, but the settler was too wise to believe the attempt was feasible.

There would be nothing extraordinary in the fugitives' going to the top of the path without molestation, but it would be absurd to suppose they could walk off into the woods undisturbed, when such a vigilant foe was in watch for them.

The American Indian does not prosecute his warfare in that fashion.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE experience of Gravity Gimp, after reaching the outside of the cavern, was remarkable in more than one respect.

When he found himself creeping up the narrow path, to the high ground above, and realized that he would make a capital target for one or a dozen of the Seneca sharpshooters, his teeth fairly rattled, and he would have retreated, but for his affection for the members of the Brainerd family.

"'Spect dere's two hundred ob 'em a-settin' in a row on a log up dere and waitin' for me, and when I come along dey'll each one hit me ober de head wid de butt end ob dere tomahawks, and by de time dey gots frough I'll hab de headache so bad dat I'll be as dizzy as Haberkick down dere."

Gravity paused for a minute, and then resumed creeping forward. Within the succeeding ten minutes he had reached the high

level ground above, without sight or sound of an Indian.

No wonder he was mystified, for it occurred to him, naturally enough, that if he could pass out unchallenged in that fashion all the others might do the same, and what seemed to be a very perilous situation might thus resolve itself into nothing of the kind.

He came near turning back and inviting his friends to follow him, but fortunately he changed his mind and decided to go farther, before believing that the cloud had lifted.

"Dere don't seem to be anybody loafing 'bout here," he muttered, "and I'll promenade a little further."

He now began cautiously moving over the same ground he and his friends had hurried along when so hotly chased by the Indians.

Only a short distance was passed in the deep shadows of the trees, when he paused, still mystified.

The question presented itself as to how he was to accomplish anything that could benefit those whom he had left behind, for if they should seek to leave the cavern during the

night, there was no other way, so far as he could judge, excepting that which he himself had taken.

"It must be dat the Injuns are down on de oder side de ravine, and I think dere's where I'll take an observation."

No task could be more delicate than this, and Gravity, with all his shrewdness, was unfitted to undertake it. There were scouts, who under the circumstances, would have gathered all the knowledge desired, and would have placed themselves among their enemies without detection, but the African was a different kind of personage.

He picked his way along the wood above the cavern, and had gone less than two rods beyond, when he stopped to gaze about him. The gloom was so dense that he could see very little, excepting when he looked across the ravine, where the moonlight fell and where the mass of rocks, so dreaded by the fugitives, was in plain sight.

He saw nothing there which could enlighten him, but his heart nearly stood still, when he not only heard a movement behind him near

the point where the path to the cavern reached the high ground above, but despite the gloom detected several dark figures moving stealthily about.

That these were Indians there could be no doubt, and the conclusion was inevitable that they had seen him come out and had allowed him to pass by them without molestation.

Being now between him and the shelter, his return was cut off, and no matter what important discoveries he might make, he had no means of telling them to his friends.

"I might have knowed dere would be some goings on like dis," he said, with a throb of alarm. "De best thing I kin do is to strike out for Stroudsburg alone, widout waitin' for de folks."

Though he might have been justified in this course, yet his conscience would not permit it, and he started again, with the purpose of passing around to the other side of the ravine, and making a closer reconnoissance of the spot where he was certain of finding enemies.

This required a long detour, and a full half-hour passed before he got across the short

ravine and began climbing up the other side, near where the Indians were known to be only a short time before.

As might have been anticipated, he went wrong, and got into the worst trouble of his life.

He had seen nothing more of the Senecas, but several faint whistles he recognized as signals passing between them, and he should have understood, from what had already taken place, that his movements were watched by the wary foe.

He was climbing a narrow passage, and was, perhaps, a dozen feet above the bottom of the ravine, when, to his dismay, a sinewy warrior sprang up in front of him, as though leaping out of the ground itself, and with tomahawk raised and a guttural exclamation, made for him.

The assault was so sudden that Gimp had no time to use his rifle, but he was not taken altogether at fault. Dropping the weapon, he recoiled a step or two and escaped the implement as it came down with a vicious whiz.

Before the warrior could recover or retreat,

the African threw both arms about him, and, lifting him as though he were an infant, flung him headlong into the ravine below.

"Dere! guess dat'll jar you a little—"

But, to his amazement, a second brawny Indian appeared directly where the other had first shown himself, and he was immediately followed by others, who, it was plain, were pushing up through a narrow passage for the purpose of capturing the African.

The latter had succeeded so well a minute before, that he again resorted to the same tactics, and, catching hold of the first warrior he could reach, he hurried him after the first. Then the next was treated in the same manner, and, for the time, Gravity Gimp became a sort of sable geyser or miniature volcano, throwing into the air sprawling Seneca Indians with a vehemence that was as picturesque as it was amazing.

The exercise of hurling full-grown men aloft, regardless of how high they go, and in what posture they strike, is an exhausting diversion, no matter how powerful the gymnast who engages in it.

Thus it came about that the herculean African speedily found that he had his hands more than full, and his terrific efforts so told upon him that he grew more sluggish in his movements, until at last he was fairly smothered with the crush of warriors, and, despite his fierce resistance, was made prisoner.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MEANWHILE the fugitives in the cavern were placed in a situation almost as grave as that of Gravity Gimp himself.

The departure of the latter created a stir that lasted some minutes after Mr. Brainerd drew back and whispered to his friends the fact that the servant had reached the ground above, and was unmolested.

"He must pass over the spot where the man stood who fired the shot," said Maggie Brainerd, "and he ought to find out who he is."

"Provided the stranger remains there, which isn't likely."

The reader knows that this hope was disappointed, for the negro saw nothing of the man nor did he once think of him, while making the reconnoissance that resulted in his own capture.

"Now," said the father, who felt as though

his responsibility had increased since the departure of the African, "Aunt Peggy, you must keep yourself and the girls as far back and away from the mouth of the cavern as you can, for there's no telling when a stray bullet may come in."

"I will see that we are all out of harm's way, while we are here," said Habakkuk McEwen.

"There's no doubt of that as far as yourself is concerned, but your personal safety is not a matter of concern to any of us here."

"But, Richard," ventured Aunt Peggy, coming close to the elbow of her brother-in-law, "what are *you* going to do?"

"I shall stay where I am, at the mouth of the cave, watching that point yonder. It won't do to relax our vigilance, for a single minute of such neglect may prove fatal."

"But you will be struck, if a shot is sent into this place."

"No one is safer than I; do you see?"

As he spoke he indicated a large, long stone, some twenty or more inches in length and a third as thick.

"It's a loose piece of the rock, which I

chanced upon. I laid it in front of me across my line of vision to rest my gun upon. That gives me an easy position, while I have a good breast-work."

"But don't you have to look over the line of protection, so as to keep good watch?" asked Maggie.

"There must be a certain amount of danger, no matter how well we are protected."

But there was one fact which Mr. Brainerd, with all his forethought, failed to take note of: his anxiety was so great that he believed he could do without sleep for a week, and yet he should have known that if he undertook to lie down on his face and keep watch, no solicitude nor effort of the will could keep him awake.

The only recourse is that of continual motion, as is the case with the sailor on watch or the sentinel on guard at night.

In fact, no posture could have been more wooing to the gentle goddess that steals away our senses ere we are aware.

The females, as Mr. Brainerd had suggested, withdrew to the rear of the cavern, placing

themselves at one side where no bullet could reach them, unless fired from the mass of rocks that the father was watching with such close attention.

Habakkuk McEwen, located near them, attempted a conversation, but no one showed any disposition to take part, and Aunt Peggy invited him so energetically to keep quiet that he complied.

As Mr. Brainerd lay extended on the flat, rocky floor of the cavern, with his gun cocked and pointed outward, he asked himself more than one question which he could not answer.

Looking as hopefully as he might at the situation, he saw no ground for encouragement.

Gravity Gimp had departed, and he did not believe he would be able to come back. In this belief the settler was correct, for the African never placed foot in the cavern again.

He had gone, taking one of the guns with him, and so much power of defense was abstracted from the little party without any possible return.

Although Habakkuk McEwen seemed at first

to be an acquisition, yet the cowardice shown a short time before so displeased Mr. Brainerd that, despite the necessity of union, he forbore almost entirely to have any communication with him.

Stretched out thus in the rocky shelter, with his gun thrust forward and his eyes fixed on the danger-point, the stillness became oppressive.

The deep, hollow roar of the forest, the soft murmur of the river, the distant crack of a rifle, and the shout of some wild Indian or flying fugitive—all these came to the listener with impressive distinctness.

But, at the same time, as I have shown, the situation was favorable to slumber, and ere the watcher suspected it, his eyes closed and his senses floated away.

He breathed so softly that none of his friends suspected he was sleeping. Indeed, almost at the same time, Habakkuk drifted into dreamland, his loud breathing being audible to all who were awake.

Eva Brainerd, with her head resting in the lap of her loved sister, slept like an infant, but

Maggie and Aunt Peggy kept as alert as when they were in the small boat, pushing across the Susquehanna. No two persons could realize the peril of their situation more than did these two, who talked in low tones, and speculated as to what was the best thing to do, if, indeed, they could do anything at all.

Mr. Brainerd did not sleep long, his senses coming back to him as softly as they had departed. When fully himself, his position was the same as taken at first. His gun was still pointed toward the column of rocks, that was more plainly visible than before, now that the moon was higher in the sky.

He felt as though he had been sleeping for hours, though in reality it was no more than fifteen minutes, and a shudder passed over him at the consciousness that a hundred red men might have leaped across the chasm in front without danger to themselves.

He could only hope that such advantage had not been taken of his remissness. Hearing the faint murmur of Maggie and Aunt Peggy's voices as they spoke to each other, he was on the point of turning to ask them a question,

when something like a shadow flitted across the space which he was guarding.

He rubbed his eyes and looked again; another and then another whisked by, like the flight of birds, and then he awoke to the fact that, while he lay there, with his loaded and aimed rifle, three Indian warriors had leaped across the opening that separated them from the mass of rocks which commanded the situation.

Even supposing none had made the leap while the watcher was asleep, it was certain that the number named had secured the shelter, and now they could pick off every one in the cavern at their convenience, without risk to themselves.

"I don't see any use of trying to hold out," muttered the watcher, in the bitterness of spirit; "at such a time as this, when the wretches get started, it seems as though everything favors them. I thought since that shot came so opportunely, that we would receive more help from the same source, but he, too, has slumbered, and while he slept—"

"Father," broke in Maggie, "I hear some

one overhead, just where that person was when he fired his gun."

The girl was right, for her parent detected it at the same moment: it was as if some one were scraping his feet over the upper surface of the rocks, though it was impossible to imagine the meaning of his action.

Then as the three listened, they thought he was gradually working toward the edge of the ravine, until suddenly the sound stopped.

No one spoke, and all were fairly holding their breath, when, to their dismay, a pair of feet, quickly followed by a pair of shapely legs, appeared in front of the cavern, slowly descending, and bringing more of the owner in sight.

Some one was lowering himself from the top of the ravine, with the purpose of dropping in the path in front and entering the cavern!

"It is an Injine," called out Aunt Peggy; "why don't you shoot him, Richard, before he kills us all?"

At that instant the stranger dropped with

a light bound, and, looking around in the gloom, asked :

"Are you all here?"

The moment he spoke, the voice was recognized as that of Fred Godfrey.

CHAPTER XXV.

WORDS cannot picture the amazement and delight of the little company in the cavern, when their strange visitor, who descended so suddenly upon them, was recognized as Fred Godfrey.

Mr. Brainerd, when the fortunate shot was fired some time before, felt just the faintest suspicion that it might be his son; but he said nothing to the others, through fear of exciting hopes that could only be disappointed.

Maggie, herself, thought of Fred, and prayed that it might be he; but she, too, held her peace—and now here, was her daring brother among them.

It required but a few minutes, after greeting his relatives, to tell of his extraordinary escape from Queen Esther, and his prolonged hunt for his friends. From what passed between him and Mr. Brainerd while making their way up the western shore, he suspected

that when he should join his family, some such manner of flight would be adopted.

He knew of this romantic place in the rocks, but it never occurred to him until after he had wasted considerable time in hunting for traces of them.

He had visited the spot more than once in his hunting excursions through the Wyoming Valley, and it did not take him long to learn the condition of affairs.

He conducted this delicate business with such skill that his presence was never suspected by his enemies, and he did his utmost to keep it concealed. He ventured on one or two signals, with a view of apprising Mr. Brainerd of his proximity, but, if that gentleman heard him, he suspected the calls were made by the Indians, and therefore paid no attention to them.

Understanding the peril which threatened his friends, Fred extended himself on the rocks above the cavern, and held the gun that he had taken from the dead body of a soldier, pointed toward the spot.

Just before he was ready, Mr. Brainerd

shot the warrior, and then Fred leveled his piece for the next one. Thus it was that, instead of one rifle, there were two aimed at the second savage, and when the first flashed in the pan, the other completed the business.

This was providential, but Fred was wise enough to see that nothing like permanent safety could be gained by that kind of defense.

He ventured on another reconnoissance, and it was while he was thus engaged that Gravity Gimp emerged from the cavern, and walked straight into the trap set for him.

"How was it you managed to get down here?" asked Mr. Brainerd.

"I used a grape-vine," replied Fred; "it took me a considerable while to arrange it, and I came near slipping my hold and dropping to the bottom of the ravine, as it was."

"Was it a wise proceeding?" continued the father.

"I hope so."

"Why did you not come down the regular path?" inquired Maggie; "Gravity seemed to have no difficulty in going away by it."

"There must be at least half a dozen Indians up there; they could have captured him without trouble, but they allowed him to get so far away that they calculated you would not suspect the danger, and might try to follow him, in which case every one of you would be in their hands this minute."

This information was startling, and the listeners were silent. Fred added:

"You can understand how great the risk was which I ran, and it is hard to explain why they didn't discover what I was doing."

"Perhaps they did."

"They would have fired on me had they known it; but there is so much deep shadow above, and they were so unsuspicious of any such proceeding, that I succeeded."

"It was a daring act, indeed, but what is to be the issue?"

"I saw that it would not do for you to remain until morning. If to-morrow's sun finds you here, you are doomed. You have no means of obtaining any food or water, and they can converge a dozen rifles on you, for

they will gain the position from which we kept them a while ago."

"They have already done so," said Mr. Brainerd. "I saw, and was unable to prevent them."

"That settles the matter, then; we must get out of this place within the next two hours, and be well on our way toward the Delaware by daylight. We can't venture up the path, and, therefore—hello! What's that?"

In taking a backward step at that moment, Fred placed his foot directly on the stomach of Habakkuk McEwen, who lay flat on his back, sound asleep.

The New Englander emitted a groan, and sprang to his feet.

Several minutes passed before everything was understood.

Fred apologized, and shook hands with him, as well as he could in the gloom, and Habakkuk then became a listener to the all-important conference that followed.

Fred, in making his reconnoissance, had discovered that Jake Golcher was the leader of the Indians.

The coolness with which Fred Godfrey discussed the situation had the effect of inspiring his friends with something of his courage.

He stood erect while talking, and Maggie leaned on one arm, while Eva, fully awake now, clung to the other side. Even Aunt Peggy relaxed from her usual reserve, and only expressed displeasure when the young man said that he saw Golcher and failed to shoot the "scand'lous villain."

Habakkuk possessed sense enough to take no part in the conference, feeling that he had forfeited all consideration in such a matter.

"The moon is working around in the sky," said Mr. Brainerd, "so that I am afraid we shall not have the shadow until morning."

"Consequently we must not wait; nothing is to be expected from Gimp, and we may as well venture at once."

There could be no disputing this decision, and all waited for Fred to make known his plan.

It was very simple, though of course attended with peril: he proposed that the grapevine which had served him so well should now

be used to assist each to the bottom of the ravine, where, in the deep shadow that prevailed, they would do their utmost to steal out into the open wood, and so pass over the mountain.

It seemed impossible to do this without detection from the Indians, who were besieging the fugitives, but desperate as was the risk, no one hesitated. In fact, Habakkuk McEwen proposed that he should go first.

"I can look around and see whether everything is all right; and if it isn't, I'll let you know, and you needn't come."

"Instead of being the first, you'll be the last," said Mr. Brainerd, curtly.

Habakkuk thought it not worth while to argue the matter, and he replied not to the severe stricture of the elder.

Fred Godfrey now ventured to the mouth of the cavern, where the vine was still dangling, the lower end being invisible in the darkness below.

From the platform in front of the cavern to the bottom of the ravine was something like twenty feet—not a very great distance, but too

great for any one to let himself drop to the flinty floor below.

"The end of the support reaches half-way," said Fred, "and each must fall the remaining distance. If we are all careful, no harm will be done."

"Is it securely fastened above?"

"It would not have sustained me were it not. There is one thing that must be borne in mind," added Fred, speaking to all, "and that is, that no matter what happens, no noise must be made. The least exclamation will be heard by the Indians, some of whom are probably still at the upper end of the path, and if they suspect what is going on, failure is certain."

All were so desirous of leaving the place without delay that the directions of Fred seemed almost superfluous.

When the young man was about to lower himself by the vine, Brainerd touched his arm and said:

"My recollection of that ravine below is that there is no way out of it; why not, therefore, climb upward instead of going down?"

"It won't do; the only ones in this party beside myself who could reach the top in that fashion are Maggie and Eva. With your age, you couldn't draw yourself half-way up, even with help."

As silently as a shadow, the young patriot drew in the crooked vine which still dangled in front of the opening, and, flinging his gun back of his shoulder, where it was held in place, he grasped the support. The next minute those standing in the gloom behind him observed the dark figure, with legs drawn up, slowly descending, as if he were going down a well.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE suspense was painful; not a whisper was exchanged, and the ear was strained to catch the sounds which they dreaded, and yet which seemed certain to come.

Even the youngest of the party could not understand why it was some of the Senecas could be so near, and fail to detect them.

Mr. Brainerd leaned forward, and peering down into the dense shadow, fancied he saw the crouching figure going lower and lower, until the end of his support was reached.

The father was holding the vine, as if to steady it, when it suddenly jarred in his hand, and seemed to draw up as though relieved of a heavy weight.

Such was the fact; just the faintest possible thump reaching his ear at that moment: manifestly, it was caused by the feet of Fred Godfrey as he dropped lightly to the bottom.

A soft and barely audible "*st, st!*" fol-

lowed, and told the truth that one of the little company at least had made the descent in safety.

The understanding was that Mr. Brainerd should be the next. He had already secured his gun to his back, so as to leave his arms free, and he now wrapped his legs about the sinuous support and gripped it tightly with his hands, saying not a word to his friends as he began sinking out of sight.

His descent was a different matter from that of his predecessor. He was not so strong and active, while his body was more bulky; in fact, Fred Godfrey, as he looked anxiously upward through the shadows, was oppressed by the misgiving that the vine would give way under the additional weight, and bring woful disaster.

But his father did better than was anticipated, even by himself. He blistered his fingers, and wrenched his muscles, but he went downward steadily, and without any break or noise, until he found the end of the vine in his grasp.

"It's only a short distance," whispered

Fred, who was able to touch his hand; "let go."

The elder did as directed, and the next second stood erect beside his son, only slightly jarred by his leap.

"I'm relieved beyond expression," said Fred; "I knew the hardest task would be for you to get down."

"I don't know why you should think so," said Mr. Brainerd, half jocularly, "when you knew my strength and activity."

"But you are the heaviest, and I feared your weight would break the vine."

"And having sustained me it is good for the rest."

"Undoubtedly it is; *st, st!*"

The signal was understood by Aunt Peggy, who, a minute later, came down the vine with very little effort.

Eva was next, and but for the danger, it would have been rare sport to slide down such a frail support in that fashion, and, under similar conditions, Maggie would have found it equally jolly.

As it was, Mr. Brainerd and his family

let themselves to the bottom of the ravine with much less difficulty and trouble than was feared.

Only Habakkuk McEwen remained above.

"There's no use waiting for him," said Aunt Peggy, in an undertone; "he's no help to us."

"It would be cruel to leave him there," interposed Maggie.

"Of course *you'd* object," snapped the vinegary Aunt Peggy; "he is as worthless as Jake Golcher himself."

"Keep quiet," interposed Mr. Brainerd; "there's too much talking here."

"You are correct," added Fred; "all this is out of order—there comes the fellow now."

The words spoken had been in whispers, but they were not needed, and nothing now was heard but the scraping of Habakkuk's legs against the vine which he was descending.

The attenuated limbs were becoming dimly visible, when the New Englander seemed to become tired, for he uttered an aspiration now and then as though seeking to hold his breath.

Fred shuddered, for a listening Indian can hear such a noise a long way on a still night.

"Keep quiet," commanded Fred, forced to speak dangerously loud; "hold your breath."

McEwen tried to obey, but the explosion, when it came, was worse than before.

"He is either a fool, or is seeking to betray us into the hands of the Indians," muttered the indignant youth, speaking hot words, that meant more than he intended.

The next minute Habakkuk reached the limit of the vine, and let go, with the purpose of dropping to the ground; but, as if fate was determined to interfere, he caught his trousers, and was instantly inverted, his head hanging downward, while his feet pointed toward the stars.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"GREAT Cæsar!" exclaimed the terrified McEwen, as he began swinging back and forth, head downward, like a huge pendulum; "won't somebody set me right side up?"

"Not another word," whispered Fred, catching him by the shoulders and jerking him loose, "or I'll dash you head-first on the rocks."

With some difficulty, the troublesome New Englander was placed on his feet, and finally the whole party stood erect at the bottom of the ravine, unharmed and hopeful.

"If we are captured, it will be due to the presence of a natural-born idiot with us," said Fred; "listen!"

It seemed at that moment as if a dozen owls were calling to each other from different points in the woods. One or two sounds came from the rocks overhead, near where the path terminated its ascent, and must have been uttered

by those who were seen there by Godfrey a short time before.

"They have discovered us," he added, "and it is now do or die."

Not another word was spoken, and the youth led the way along the ravine without any definite idea of where he was going, or whether there was any chance of escaping what might be the very trap into which their enemies were seeking to lure them.

The ground was rough and stony, and they scrambled forward like a party of mountain tourists in a great hurry.

Fred Godfrey maintained his place at the head, Maggie and Eva close behind, while Aunt Peggy, Mr. Brainerd, and Habakkuk McEwen followed.

When they had gone less then a hundred yards, all were relieved by finding they were steadily rising.

If this peculiarity continued, they must soon reach the level ground above, and, in the darkness, would be able to go a good distance before morning.

But it was almost idle to hope, for the

thought was scarcely in their minds when the whole party were brought to a standstill by coming squarely against the solid wall.

"Is this the end of the path?" asked Brainerd, observing the dilemma that checked them.

"I hope not—but let's look. Those signals going back and forth across the valley refer to us. I believe the whole Indian force know what we have done, and are arranging to capture us."

The probabilities pointed that way, and, when several minutes' hurried search failed to find an outlet to the ravine, which now narrowed until the two sides met, something akin to despair took possession of the fugitives.

"It's my belief," ventured McEwen, "that the best thing we can do is to open negotiations with the Senecas, with a view of obtaining honorable terms. What are your views, Mr. Brainerd?"

"That the best thing for you to do is to hold your peace."

"Such is my own theory," added Fred, who had no patience with the fellow. "Hello!"

As he spoke he made an upward leap, and catching the slight projecting ledge of rock, to the amazement of the others, drew himself up and secured stable footing. A few seconds were spent in a hasty survey, when he dropped nimbly beside them again.

"I think there is a way out," he whispered; "but we can't climb up there alone—that is, all of us: we have got to have help."

"And that cannot be obtained."

"Yes, it can; the grape-vine is just the thing; I can fasten one end of that above, and then assist every one to the top."

"But it will be too dangerous for you to go back—"

"Wait right where you are," broke in Fred; "don't move or make any noise; I won't be gone long."

And before any more objection could be made he vanished in the shadow.

Standing thus, with all their senses on the alert, they heard sounds that were anything but reassuring.

The notes of the whip-poor-will and the dismal hooting of owls came from different por-

tions of the wood. Whether or not the Indians knew precisely what the fugitives had done, they were unquestionably aware that something unusual was going on.

A minute's reflection could not fail to show to all their hapless situation. It may be said they were literally walled in, with their enemies perched on the rocks on every hand, able to hold them there as long as they chose.

However, no one was disposed to give up effort while any grounds for making such effort was open.

As there was no saying how long the fugitives would be forced to wait for the return of the lieutenant, they sat down on the rocky seats, taking care that they kept in the dense shadow that had served them so well.

Eva nestled by her father, and had placed her hand in his, and was in the act of asking a question, when the sharp report of a rifle was heard above their heads, and only a short distance off.

The instant thought was, that Fred Godfrey had either shot some one, or had been fired at himself.

But Mr. Brainerd was sure that the report came from the pile of rocks that commanded the cavern just vacated by them. This was a vast relief, but all shuddered to think what the results would have been had the weapon been discharged only a few minutes before.

With the bullet sent from such a point, it could not have failed to do execution, for it will be recalled that the fugitives, while preparing to start, were exposed to any bullet that might be sent into the opening.

The supposition was, that though the red men could not see any of the whites on account of the deep shadow to which we have referred more than once, they knew the location of the cavern itself sufficiently well to fire directly into it.

It will be seen, as a consequence, that such a shot, sent fifteen minutes earlier, must have caused the death of one, at least, of the company.

But, after all, would it have been anything more than anticipating by a few hours their certain fate?

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MEANWHILE, Fred Godfrey was making the most of his opportunities, and the grass did not grow under his feet.

The distance passed over by himself and friends was so slight, that he was back beneath the cavern within a couple of minutes after bidding them such a hasty good-bye.

No one could have been more alive to the situation than he, who halted directly under the place that had sheltered him and his friends for a brief while, and looked and listened.

"Can it be that they really know nothing of our flight?" he asked himself. "It seems impossible that, after following us and guarding the approaches so closely, such can be the truth."

So it appeared, indeed, and Fred was not without a pang of apprehension that Jake

Golcher and his Indians were playing a game, in which they were sure to win.

But it was too late to speculate now, and pausing only a moment, he leaped forward, caught the end of the vine and climbed it hand over hand. His activity and strength enabled him to ascend like a sailor, and a moment later he stood within the cavern that he had left but a short time before.

Nothing was to be gained there, and grasping the support he went on upward.

Such a method of ascent is exhausting, and he was tired, when, at last, he stood on the level ground above.

As circumstances forbade the use of the vine by which he had come up, and by which he must descend again, he began hunting as best he could for another, which he speedily found. This was carefully cut and trimmed, and then he dropped it over the ravine, and in the stillness he plainly heard the rustling as it struck the bottom.

While thus engaged, the rifle was fired from the rocks across the gorge, Fred seeing the flash, so that he knew the point it came from.

At first he was sure he was the target, but concluded that such was not the case.

Filled with misgivings, he crept a few steps in the direction of the head of the path that came up from below, and listened. He was afraid to go any closer, but he was as certain as if he saw them, that several of the Indians were clustered there, awaiting the occurrence of some expected event.

"There's some mystery in this business that I fail to grasp," added Fred, as he caught the sound of guns and the faint whoops of the Indians and Tories on the other side the river. "It is possible that most of them have withdrawn, unwilling to linger when there are so many victims awaiting them in other places, but I can hardly believe it, since Jake Golcher leads them."

Moved by an anxiety that forbade him to keep still, he once more swung himself from the rocks, supported by the thick, strong vine that had served them all so well, and it required only a brief time to reach the bottom.

Everything, so far as he could judge, was in proper form, and he hastened up the ravine,

rejoining his friends, who naturally were in a fever of anxiety over what seemed his prolonged absence.

"Now that you have got the vine," said his father, "I have been puzzling myself ever since you left, to understand how you are going to use it."

"It doubtless strikes you as absurd as the idea of using the one by which I had to climb up the rocks and come down again, but I am hopeful there is a way."

"I shall be glad to learn it."

"But that shot—who fired it?"

"One of the Indians, I presume."

"Was it not aimed at you?"

"I think not; but, if it was, you see it missed me, so it is a question to which we need give no thought."

All drew a breath of relief when Fred made known that no trouble had been experienced from the red men, who were believed to be in the immediate vicinity of the upper end of the path.

The lieutenant now explained that his plan was to mount the shoulders of Habakkuk

McEwen, and thus reach a projection on the rocks, by the help of which he hoped to attain a still higher point, or rather shelf, from which it would be an easy matter to climb to the level ground above, and push their way toward the distant Delaware River.

The feat was too difficult for the rest of the party to accomplish, which explains why the grape-vine became so necessary. With the aid of that, and with Fred tugging above, there was reason to hope that the ascent would be made with little trouble.

Accordingly, Habakkuk McEwen, without any protest, stood up against the wall, and Fred, with gun and vine secured, so as to leave his limbs free, mounted to his shoulders with the ease of an acrobat.

Then, straightening himself, he groped about with his hands, and was fortunate in finding a broad ledge within easy grasp. It was a difficult matter, even with such help, to draw himself up, but by great care he managed to do so, and then found that by a similar maneuver he could reach the ground above, where the way was clear to the woods.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

"It was a hard task."

This was gratifying, and, dropping the end of the vine to his friends, he whispered for Mr. Brainerd to seize it and to begin to climb.

It was a hard task, and, had the support given way, doubtless the old gentleman would have been killed or grievously hurt, but he struggled and was pushed up by Habakkuk, and the vine was tugged at by Fred above, until at last the panting father reached the ledge and stood beside his son.

As there were now two to use their strength in lifting, Aunt Peggy, Eva, and Maggie had but to grasp the support, when they were drawn up without any effort on their own part. Habakkuk came last, and he tried so hard to assist, that it may be said he went up feet first, sawing the air so vigorously with his legs that they appeared on the ledge before his body reached it.

But the fugitives were all there at last, and something like genuine hope began to stir every member of the company.

"Now," said Fred, "we have the same experience to go through, and we shall reach solid ground above. I will go up as before."

Only a small part of the moonlight found its way to the spot where they were crouching, and they felt it would not do to stay longer.

Slowly and carefully Fred went up the rocks, and all saw him safely reach the level ground, where he vanished.

At the instant he did so they caught a peculiar sound, as though a slight struggle was going on, but it instantly ceased, and, though the friends were alarmed, they said nothing, thinking that perhaps Fred had stumbled over some obstruction in the dark.

"*St, st!*"

The signal which he made before reassured all, and drove the thought of danger from their minds.

The same order was repeated; Mr. Brainerd grasped the vine, and, helped both above and below, gradually surged upward until he, too, went over the edge of the ravine, as it may be called, and vanished.

Maggie started, when she again heard a curious movement above, as if made by a scuffle, and her heart throbbed with the suspicion that something was wrong.

"I tell you," she whispered, "there's trouble up there."

"No, there isn't," replied Aunt Peggy, "I suppose—there!"

The same sibilant call as before was repeated, and the elderly lady showed her faith in her own assertion by catching hold of the vine, and allowing herself to be pulled up as her predecessor had been.

Maggie and Eva were left with Habakkuk, who was plainly nervous, though it might be hard for him to explain why.

"Do you feel skeart?" he asked, in an undertone, as the rope of natural growth came dangling about their heads.

"Yes," said the elder sister; "didn't you notice a strange noise after Fred and father got up?"

"I don't know, but there is something queer; they don't seem to show themselves after they reach the top; it looks to me as if they tumbled over into some hole—ah!"

As the signal was heard the three looked up and caught the dim outlines of a head. There was not enough light to identify it, but

had the moonlight fallen upon it, those who stood below would have observed that the face did not belong to any one of their three friends.

With misgiving, Maggie grasped the support and went up; then Eva followed, and, last of all, Habakkuk McEwen stood alone.

He paused in doubt a minute or so, but when the vine swung within his reach, he seized it, muttering:

"I may as well follow the crowd."

And he did.

The instant he arrived at the top he was seized by several Seneca Indians, and the astounding truth then dawned upon him that not only he, but every one of the party, had climbed squarely into the trap set for them, and, without a single exception, were prisoners in the hands of the very red men they were trying with so much skill to avoid.

CHAPTER XXIX.

IT will be admitted that the little party of fugitives whose fortunes we are following displayed great skill in escaping the Tories and Indians, who, on that "day of desolation," wrought such ruin in the Wyoming Valley.

A wonderful good fortune attended them up to a certain point, and yet the humiliating truth must also be admitted, that, from the moment they rushed pell mell into the friendly cavern in the rocks, they were outgeneraled by the Senecas, under the leadership of the Tory, Jake Golcher.

It looked, for a time, as if the success of the patriots was to be crowned by the most brilliant achievement of all, in stealing out of the ravine under the very noses, so to speak, of their vigilant enemies; and yet, despite their caution and well-directed audacity, which never overreached themselves, every move-

ment, even to the slightest, was known to the redskins, who carried out their own scheme with even greater subtlety and skill.

When Fred Godfrey reached the ground above he detected nothing suspicious, and, making the vine secure, turned and signaled to his friends to follow him.

It was at that instant he was seized by two powerful warriors, one of whom threw his arm about his neck, and jerking his head back, nearly strangled him. The lieutenant was caught at such disadvantage that he was helpless, but he struggled with all the strength possible, and attempted to utter a cry of warning to his friends.

But his hands were pinioned behind him, a dusky palm was glued over his mouth, and some one said in very good English:

"If you speak a word, you're a dead man!"

He was dragged back into the wood, where his wrists and elbows were tied with as much care as if he were worth all the other prisoners taken that day in Wyoming.

It required but a few seconds to complete

this performance, and while it was going on two other Senecas were tugging away at the vine, to which Mr. Brainerd was clinging.

The old gentleman was altogether unsuspicious, and he came sprawling over on the ground with considerable emphasis.

"I don't see the necessity of yanking a fellow out of his boots," he laughed, in a guarded voice. "It will hardly do to be so ardent with the others—"

At that point in his remarks he was pounced upon, and served very nearly the same as his son. He fought as fiercely: but the Indians were prepared for it. He was run back in the wood behind the lieutenant, and the two condoled with each other—their chagrin being inexpressible.

Then came Aunt Peggy, whose figure was so light compared with that of Mr. Brainerd, that she was literally whisked to the top of the ground, seeming to drop from some point above.

"Maggie said there was something wrong," remarked the voluble lady; "but I'm sure there wasn't anything very queer that I heard.

If there are any of them Ingines anywhere in the neighborhood I'd just like the chance—"

The wish of the lady was gratified, for at that moment two figures appeared beside her, as if they had sprung through a trap-door: and one, who was gifted with an exceptional amount of waggery, actually leaned over and kissed her cheek.

"You scand'lous villain!" gasped Aunt Peggy, too much horrified to speak above a whisper: "ain't you ashamed of yourself?"

With which exclamation she struck him on the side of the face, with a vicious vigor that gave out a report like the crack of a pistol.

"I'll teach you how to insult a lady—"

Her words were stopped at this point by a dusky hand that was pressed over her mouth and held there despite her frantic struggles, and she was forced back to where her two friends were prisoners.

Maggie Brainerd went up the rocks with much distrust, as will be remembered, and, as it was, she was so suspicious that she would

not have gone at all but for the fact that father and brother had preceded her, and no matter what their fate must be, she wished to share it with them.

"If they have fallen into the hands of the Indians, I have no wish to remain away from them."

She peered into the gloom as sharply as she could and was not kept in suspense.

She offered no resistance, and quickly joined those who were overtaken by disaster.

It was much the same with Eva, although she struggled with great energy and narrowly escaped violence, as did Aunt Peggy, when she chastised the audacious Seneca.

Habakkuk McEwen, as we have stated, was in a quandary, but he ascended, his feet going over the ledge first. Such an approach to a foe is not disquieting, and he was caught at greater disadvantage than any of the others.

He tried hard to throw himself over the rocks, but was prevented; and thus it was that the capture of the entire party was completed.

"Great Cæsar!" exclaimed Habakkuk, as he joined his friends. "The height, and length, and breadth, and depth of this failure is the most stupend'us I ever heerd tell of."

And no one said him nay.

CHAPTER XXX.

IT is necessary at this point that some attention should be given to the predecessor of our friends in captivity—Gravity Gimp.

The particulars of his capture will be recalled, it being somewhat similar to that of his followers, inasmuch as he was pounced upon and overwhelmed before he could make any effectual resistance, though, for a time, he kept things "moving."

But he was forced to succumb at last, and was led away by those whom he had fought so bravely, and into whose hands he dreaded falling aware as he was what fate awaited him.

"Be keerful," he called out, limping heavily, "I've got a game leg, and I want yer to play light on it."

Whether they understood his words or not is a small matter; but the American Indian is accustomed to the language of gesture, and when the African limped forward, as though

unable to bear half the weight on one limb, they could not mistake what it meant.

The gun of the captive was taken from him, and, as he was such a miserable pedestrian just then, his hands were not bound behind him, as was the case with the prisoners afterwards taken.

Ordinarily, the rough usage given his captors during the struggle would have resulted in serious injury to some of them; but the Iroquois were too sinewy, lithe, and graceful on their feet to fare ill, and they gathered about him, with something akin to admiration, when he was conducted farther into the mountain, where they had a large camp-fire burning.

"I s'pose eberybody makes mistakes," muttered Gravity, moving slowly along; "leastways I'm purty sartin I made a wery big one, when I got too cur'us to know what dese willains was up to."

No indignity was offered him on the walk to the fire, which was burning a couple of hundred yards away, but he felt that nothing like mercy was to be expected from his captors.

The negro had proven his coolness and courage in more than one instance that day, and Maggie Brainerd asked herself whether the loyal fellow really knew what fear is.

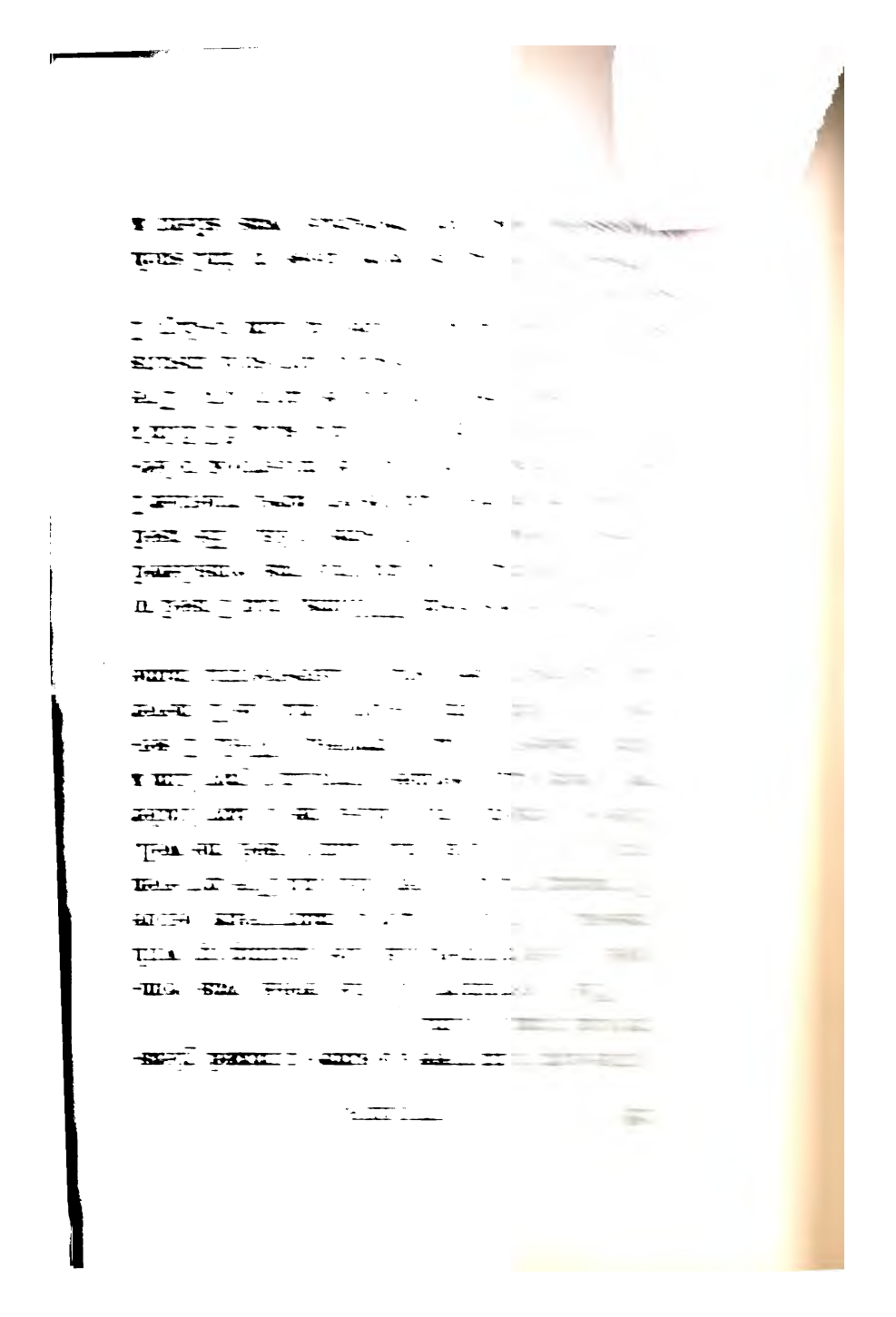
But when Gimp reached the camp-fire, and saw Jake Golcher with other Indians grouped around him, his heart gave a throb of terror.

He knew that wretch too well to make any mistake concerning him. It was Gimp who, but a few hours before, had visited the worst kind of physical indignity on the Tory, who now possessed the chance to repay him.

Jake was sitting on a fallen tree, leaning forward with his elbows on his knees, and his chin in his hands, looking into the glowing embers, and apparently only half listening to the guttural conversation going on among the Indians about him.

He had spent so much time with the Seneca branch of the Iroquois, that he understood their tongue quite well. But, as he slowly puffed at his short clay pipe, his thoughts were far away.

Most likely he was recalling the incidents



minute, until it seemed as if Satan got still a stronger hold upon him.

"But there's *one* man close by that I would give a thousand prisoners for," he added, puffing spitefully at his pipe, "and it looks as if I'm going to have him. Providence does favor the truly good," added the miscreant. "I've got the whole party penned up in a hole, and if they get away from us it will be the biggest thing of the kind ever done in these parts.

"I want to get hold of that Gimp, that stole my gun and gave me such a kicking that I feel six inches taller than ever before, and have to be mighty careful about settin' down. He's a sort of giant, but if we lay hands on him there'll be mighty little of him left when we get through.

"There's Maggie Brainerd, the prettiest gal that ever left Connecticut and settled in the Wyoming Valley. I knowed her when she was a little one, and then she was so purty that people used to stop her in the road, to kiss and admire her.

"She always acted kind toward me, and I

used to think she was kinder tender and loving, and I b'leve now I might have got her, if that half-brother of hers, Fred Godfrey, hadn't come along and set her agin me."

The brows of the Tory contracted at the recollection of something that burned in his memory.

"A year ago, he was down here in the valley, and I feared there wasn't much chance for me with Maggie, so I thought I would shame him before the town to that extent he would never show his face in it again. He was talkin' in the store to a lot of our neighbors, and had enlisted, and he thought every young chap oughter. I said I didn't b'leve he had enough courage to fire a gun at a red coat, when he said he had enough to fire me out, if I didn't keep a civil tongue in my head.

"That's just what I wanted, for I had been building up my muscle for two weeks, with the very idee of whalin' him, and I sailed in.

"Wal," added the Tory, with a sigh, "the fight was over afore I'd fairly got into it. I come out of the winder with a sash round my neck, and if I hadn't struck agin Aunt Peggy,

who was walkin' by, my neck would have been broken off short. I didn't get over that lambastin' for a month, but Fred Godfrey little thought when he jined the crowd in laughin' at me, that he had sealed his doom."

The face of the Tory flushed, for he was sure that he had the best reason to believe that he spoke the truth.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"YES," added Jake, with a sigh of something like pleasure; "it looks very much as though I've got a chance to even up my accounts with 'em all. The folks are having a good time on t'other side the river, and to-morrer, when Forty Fort surrenders, Wyoming will be wiped out so clean that the only way of telling where it has been will be by the ashes.

"I've got a lot of the best Senecas that ever took the war-path, and I've promised them the biggest kind of a reward if they succeed in scooping in the whole party. Queen Esther told 'em to go with me and do just as I directed, so they're bound to show the stuff they're made of. Gray Panther is their chief, and he's directing 'em, and he beats any Injin I ever heard tell of for downright cunning, and is as good as a bloodhound on the trail."

Thus it was that, although Jake Golcher

was the nominal head of the war party, the renowned chief, Gray Panther, was guiding operations, and it is to that remarkable Seneca Indian that the success of the redskins in outgeneraling the fugitives was due.

"I know that Maggie came near pegging out with a broken heart when her mother died, three years ago," continued Golcher, "and she is so attached to her father, brother, and sister, that she will do anything in her power to save harm coming to them."

This fact could not fail to suggest the course that had taken shape in his mind long before.

"We will capture them all; then I'll make known my terms: Maggie must agree to marry me; she will do it, too, if she makes the promise, and I'll agree to let all the rest go. I'll keep my word so far as the old man and Eva, and I guess the Aunt Peggy, is concerned; but there's two that I'll wipe out—Fred Godfrey and that Gravity Gimp.

"I may have to promise to let up on 'em, but I can fix it with Gray Panther, so they'll be *accidentally* killed; but I'll never feel easy

till they're both underground. As for that nigger—" And taking out his pipe, he ground his teeth together, and clenched the fingers of the free hand, and then, looking up, saw Gravity Gimp, the African, standing before him.

"Good-evenin'," said the servant, bowing low, and making a salaam with his broad hand, inasmuch as he was without his hat; "I hopes I finds yer werry well dis ebenin."

Jake Golcher sprang to his feet, and his pipe dropped from his hand. It often happens that the very person of whom we are thinking turns up before us, but, although there was nothing supernatural in the appearance of the African, the renegade was startled for the moment into believing that such was the fact.

Quickly recovering, he muttered something, and sitting down again on the log, picked up his pipe, took a puff or two, and looking at the lame African, asked:

"Where did you come from? I thought you was Satan."

"Dat's purty rough on Satan; but I's Grav-

ity Gimp, at your sarvice, and if it am all de same I'll sot down on de log beside yer, being dat I've got a tremenjus game leg."

As he spoke, Gravity limped to the fallen tree, and took his seat a short distance away, uttering a groan of pain, and nursing the limb as though his torture was great.

Jake Golcher was sure he never saw such impudence, but he concluded to humor the fellow for a while, until he could extract some information from him.

He was sorry his leg had been injured, for he would have liked to make him run the gauntlet, and now the suffering to which he should be doomed would have to take a different character.

The Tory first asked the Indians some questions, and gathered how the powerful negro had been captured. It was done under the direction of Gray Panther, whose hand appeared in many a skillful achievement that evening and the day following.

Golcher learned from the same chief that every movement of the fugitives had been noted, and that the whites had been deceived

to such an extent that they were likely to walk into the trap the Senecas had set for them.

Jake was favorable to making an open attack on the whites, but the sachem assured him they could all be taken without the loss of any more warriors, and so it was left to the chief.

There was only one point in which the Senecas were at fault, and that was respecting the man who fired the second shot, that killed the Indian as he was leaping for the rocks from which to shoot at the fugitives.

They supposed it was discharged from within the cavern, and were unaware of the fact that Lieutenant Godfrey was so near his friends without being with them.

They did not learn of his cautious descent, and only discovered his presence among them after the capture of the African and the start made by the fugitives to leave the ravine.

Golcher was much interested in the news, and he urged Gray Panther to spare no effort to make his success complete, assuring him of a big reward, in addition to the praise of Queen

Esther, who at that moment was engaged on the other side the river in torturing a number of prisoners.

The chief assured him that he had no cause for uneasiness, and then, turning about, withdrew with his warriors, leaving only a single one with Jake Golcher to guard the prisoner.

CHAPTER XXXII.

WHILE the conversation was going on between the Tory and Gray Panther, Gravity Gimp was rubbing and nursing his "game leg," with many sighs and groans, which he took care should be heard by those around him, while at the same time it did not annoy them.

"Sprained it, I s'pose," remarked Golcher, deeming it best to keep back his intentions toward the negro until after he should have extracted all the information he could.

"Wuss dan a strain," said Gravity, looking ruefully down at the limb and rubbing it with one hand.

"How can it be worse than a strain?"

"It's busted."

"You talk like a fool—what do you mean by bustin' a leg?"

"I mean dat it ain't no use any more—ain't wuth nuffin to dance de double shuffle wid."

"How did you hurt it?"

"Got struck by a cannon-ball dis arternoon —but I recovered from dat slight inconwenience, and I strained and broke it in two or three places a little while ago."

"How?"

"In flingin' Injins ober de rocks, I wrenched it."

The explanation was not very clear to Golcher, but he was satisfied the limb was badly sprained, and he cared nothing further. It rendered what might have been a dangerous prisoner comparatively harmless, which was a good thing while the main party of Indians were away, engaged in entrapping the fugitives, whose possession was so much more valuable.

"All you folks got into the cavern, down among the rocks over there, thinkin' you was safe, didn't you?"

"We crept in dar not 'cause we thought it war safe, but 'cause it war the bestest thing we could do."

"Do you know anything about Fred Godfrey?"

"Yes; he hab de honor ob my 'quaintance."

"That isn't what I mean: do you know where he is?"

"I tink he am ober on de oder side ob de riber slewing Injins and Tories."

It will be recollected that Gravity left the cavern before the lieutenant put in his appearance, and the African therefore knew nothing of his presence with his friends.

"Wal," growled Golcher, finding it hard to repress the anger that was gnawing at his heart; "the trouble to-day has been that too many of the rebels got slewed themselves; if it hadn't been for that, things would have gone different; but that Godfrey will be with the party up in the rocks afore long."

"Guess you're 'bout right, Massa Golcher."

"Do you know," suddenly asked Golcher turning on the negro, "that we're going to have every one of that party afore daylight?"

"No, I didn't know it; did you?"

"They'll be here inside of two hours, and then there'll be fun."

"Reckons dere'll be a little fun afore you cotches 'em."

"They're in the rocks, but we can rout them out whenever we want to; they think we don't know what they're doing, but Gray Panther hasn't missed anything."

"I noticed that Massa Brainerd didn't miss either, when he plugged dem Injuns dat was trying to sneak in behind the rocks."

"See here," exclaimed Golcher, turning upon him; "you'd better keep a civil tongue in your head."

"Dat's all right—I was jes' joking wid you —but, if you hain't any 'bjection, Massa Golcher, I'd like to know what yer gwine to do wid me? Am yer gwine ter take me up in York State and put me to work on a farm?"

"If you live a couple of hours longer, you'll be put through the sprouts."

"Put frough de sprouts," repeated Gimp, as if to himself; "wonder what dat means."

While this conversation was going on, the Indian who was keeping guard was seated on the other side the fire in a lounging attitude, and his head now and then bobbed down on his breast in a way that showed he was partly asleep.

Gravity Gimp did not appear to notice him, but he saw every movement, and, without appearing to do so, hitched a little closer to the Tory.

The latter seemed to conclude that nothing more was to be gained from the negro, and he ceased asking him questions.

The servant groaned and rubbed his leg with every appearance of great pain.

"Massa Golcher," said he, with a groan, "I'd be much obliged to yer, if you'll jes pull off my shoe and rub dat ankle for half an hour."

And as he made this astounding request he moved still nearer, and thrust his enormous shoe almost in the face of the renegade, who turned savagely upon him.

"I'll teach yer manners, you black—"

He rose to his feet and whipped out his knife as he spoke, but Gimp also came to the standing position, and he was a little quicker than the Tory. Golcher had drawn his weapon, but before he suspected the design of his assailant, Gimp lowered his head and ran like a steam-engine straight at him.

The iron-like skull struck Golcher "'midships" and knocked him over backwards, his heels going up in the air, while he described an almost complete somersault, with the breath gone from his body.

The drowsy Seneca roused up just in time to witness the performance, and to see the same battering-ram charging down upon him.

He turned to leap aside until he could draw his tomahawk, but he was a second too late, and the projectile took him in the pit of the stomach, and banged him against a neighboring tree with such violence that the breath left his body also, and there is reason to believe it never returned.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THERE was not a particle of lameness in the movements of Gravity Gimp as he wet through this programme, but his actions were like those of an athlete.

Catching up the gun of the prostrate Indian, he was off like a shot, running with the speed of a deer among the trees, and with great risk, for the darkness was too dense to permit him to see where he was going.

"Dat ere pertendin' dat I was lame was a stroke ob gen'us," he muttered, with a huge grin, as he slackened his gait somewhat, "and, if it hadn't been for dat lameness, I'd been 'sassinated.

"Shouldn't wonder if dey did scoop in all de folks," he added, with a pang of fear, "and if dey does, why Aunt Peggy must go to buttin' de Injuns ober de same as I done. *Sh!*"

He listened for sounds of pursuit, but there was none, and he drew a sigh of relief,

hoping that his friends were in as safe a situation as he.

Gray Panther, chief of the Senecas, conducted his portion of the programme, as we have already seen, with cunning and skill.

Fred Godfrey, Richard Brainerd, Maggie and Eva, Aunt Peggy, and Habakkuk McEwen were his prisoners, and within five minutes after they became such they were started, under the charge of the warriors, for the camp, where Jake Golcher was expecting them.

The hands of the males were tied behind them so securely that they felt there was no possibility of freeing themselves. Their weapons were removed, as a matter of course, but no one of the three females was offered any indignity by the Indians, who were carrying out the instructions of Jake Golcher himself.

Since the captors did not seem to feel any objection, several of the whites ventured on a few words. Habakkuk, however, as he stumbled along over the obstructions at the rear, felt in anything but a conversational mood, and for a time held his peace.

"These are the most scand'lous purceedings that I ever heard tell of," ventured Aunt Peggy, in her snappish way.

"You are right," said Fred Godfrey; "it is the most terrible reverse I ever saw."

"Oh, I don't mean that."

"What do you refer to?"

"That Ingine actually tried to kiss me—didn't you see him?"

"No, I wasn't aware of it."

"I gave him one slap that he'll remember, I reckon!"

The situation was too solemn for Fred to utter the remark that would have come to his lip at any other time. He therefore directed his next words to Maggie, who was close to her father, and holding the hand of Eva.

"This looks pretty bad, Maggie," said he, in a low voice, "and it is hard to find we were mistaken, when I was so hopeful that we had passed all danger."

"So it is, but how many of our friends and neighbors have fared still more ill!"

"They are to be envied," said Mr. Brainerd,

speaking for the first time, "for their woe is ended, and ours is to come."

"There may be hope," remarked the daughter, though it must be confessed she saw none; "we must not despair."

"It is well enough to talk about hoping on forever," said her father, who seemed more dejected than the others, "but every man that is born must sooner or later reach the hour when hope is ended: we struck the hour and minute just now."

"I'm disposed to hold out as long as any of you," said Fred Godfrey, "but I must own that I feel about as you do."

"And so does every one," added Mr. Brainerd, "for the days of miracles passed long ago; some of our escapes to-day came about as close to the miraculous as they could well do, and that may have led us to expect unreasonable things."

At this juncture Gray Panther seemed to think there was too much conversation going on, and in broken English he ordered all to keep their tongues still.

No one of the prisoners regretted the com-

mand, for it was a dismal thing to talk when their hearts were so oppressed.

The route they followed was through the wood, that was stony and rocky, and in the deep shadows it was anything but pleasing work. The captors kept close to the captives, so as to prevent any break for freedom on their part.

The distance was not far, but it was not yet passed, when something took place which caused some alarm, though none of the prisoners could tell what it was.

One of the Indians in front uttered a peculiar signal, which caused a halt on the part of every Seneca. Gray Panther hastened forward.

It was idle for Godfrey to look for any interference in their behalf, but he did feel, for a few brief seconds, something akin to such hope.

But Gray Panther speedily returned, and the march was resumed, with the same stillness and care as before.

What the cause of the interruption was, became known to none but the Senecas themselves.

A few minutes later, the glimmer of a light was seen among the trees, and as the faces of the party were turned in that direction, they knew it was the camp-fire that was their destination.

Only a few steps more were passed when the entire party, with the exception of the African servant, stood in the presence of Jake Golcher, the Tory.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

AFTER a courageous struggle against the Indians, the fugitives, as I have shown, were taken prisoners.

It was a singular scene, as the six whites, the men having their hands bound behind them, came out of the gloom of the wood, and, under the escort of more than a dozen Seneca warriors, approached the camp-fire, where Jake Golcher, the Tory, awaited them.

Mr. Brainerd, who walked close to Fred Godfrey, said, in a low voice,

"Under Heaven, my son, you are our only hope; if you see a chance, no matter how desperate, take it."

"I will," was the low answer; "I shall make a break before the last scene comes."

As the party emerged into the light thrown out by the burning wood, the chief interest of the captors seemed to center in Habakkuk

McEwen, for the reason, as the reader will recall, that he was partially disguised as an Indian. The fact that such was the case had been noted, of course, by his captors, who seemed to be in some doubt as to the cause, but not until now did they gain a good view of him.

The place where the camp-fire was burning was a small natural clearing, with a fallen tree lying extended one side, so as to afford a seat for a score of persons, if they chose to use it.

The fugitives were brought up and arranged in front of the log, Mr. Brainerd standing first, McEwen second, Fred Godfrey third, while Aunt Peggy, Maggie Brainerd, and Eva supported each other.

Even the whites themselves looked at the eccentric New Englander with some curiosity, for only the females had seen him by the light of day. His dress was of that mongrel character, worn alike by frontier Indians and white scouts, while his face still retained the paint that had been daubed on it by his friend, miles away in the wilderness.

The little company were placed in the

order named, standing so that the reflection of the fire-light revealed every countenance with the distinctness of mid-day, when, as we have intimated, there was a general scrutiny of Habakkuk, who stood the ordeal well.

He threw his shoulders back, and tried hard to look like an Indian warrior, all unconscious of the curious eyes bent upon him.

The Senecas were grouping themselves in front, when Gray Panther uttered an exclamation that drew attention to him. He had stumbled over the inanimate figure of the warrior whom he left to guard the colored prisoner for Jake Golcher.

At the same moment the Tory himself rose from the farthest end of the leg, bent over as though suffering great pain, while his face was pale as ashes. He said to the chief that it had all been caused by the negro, who was supposed to be helplessly lame, but was only feigning it. He developed into an animated pile-driver with such suddenness that the warrior who received his full attentions would never recover, and Jake himself felt much

doubt whether he should ever feel entirely well again.

Such creatures as Golcher are the most abject of cowards when in the presence of death, and while he lay on the ground, gasping for breath and certain that the blow received from the iron skull of the African had finished him, he became altogether a different man from what he had been during life.

He was repentant, and begged Heaven not to punish him for his multitudinous sins. He pledged himself that if the little patriot band should fall into his hands he would release every one, and conduct them beyond the dangerous neighborhood.

Alas, for human resolution! Immediately after making the pledge he began to rally, and as he came back to his natural self his good intentions were scattered like thistle-down in the wind. By the time the captives were ranged along the log in front of him he was the same malignant Tory that he had always been.

The discovery of the dead body of the Indian caused some confusion among Gray Pan-

ther's band, and there was considerable lamentation, during which the prisoners were partly forgotten.

Fred Godfrey was watching like a cat for his chance, and twice he was on the point of making a break. Had his hands been unfastened he would have done so, but he waited for what he hoped would be a more favorable opportunity.

A guard of two warriors took charge of their dead comrade, while the others again centered their gaze upon the New Englander, who stood the scrutiny with the same assurance as before.

Jake Golcher, rising to his feet, came painfully down the line, and without paying any attention to the others, stopped in front of McEwen, whom he scrutinized a full minute, both standing motionless and looking squarely in each other's eyes, without uttering a syllable.

CHAPTER XXXV.

JAKE GOLCHER and Habakkuk McEwen were evidently old acquaintances, and the Tory seemed to be trying to identify him through the paint that was daubed over his countenance in such a loose fashion.

Suddenly the Tory broke into a laugh and exclaimed:

"It's him, as sure as creation! I thought it when I first set eyes on you. Where did you come from, and why are you got up in that flowery style?"

"Sh! sh! sh!" exclaimed McEwen, contracting his brows and shaking his head; "I don't want these folks to know who I am. Don't speak my name."

"And why not?" asked the other, with another laugh, as he came closer to the captive.

"They think I'm a friend to 'em; they don't know I'm a Tory that come into the valley to raise partic'lar mischief with the settlers."

Jake Golcher immediately became very sober and drew still closer to McEwen, still gazing sharply into his face. Then he asked in a low voice, which, however, was distinctly heard by the whites, so perfect was the stillness at that moment.

"Do you expect me to believe that?"

"You kin do as you please about it, but I've been with Colonel John Butler's forces for three days."

"Where was you during the battle this arternoon?"

"*I was there*," was the unblushing response; "I was out yesterday with a scouting party under Ke-fi-ke-fa, the son of Queen Esther, who was shot by a party of settlers."

Whether Habakkuk spoke all truth or not, the Tory knew he uttered it so far as concerned the son of Katharine Montour, queen of the Senecas. Her son was killed on the day preceding, as declared by the prisoner, and it was that cause, as I have already intimated, which served to excite her to such a pitch of fury during the battle and massacre.

Jake Golcher looked at him again with the

same searching gaze, as though he was partly convinced and sought to make sure by reading his countenance.

"What made you paint yourself up in this fashion?"

"So as to be took for an Injin."

"What did you want to be took for an Injin for?"

"Wouldn't I have more chance to do hot work?"

"I don't see why," was the response.

"Wal, if you had been near me you would have seen. I scared these folks half to death, but, when they found out who I was, they was dreadful sweet onto me. That give me the chance I wanted with them, and then when the Senecas and our own boys seen me, they didn't interfere, so I had a free path to travel."

"How comes it you're in this scrape?"

"I got in among these folks so as to turn 'em over to you, and if it hadn't been for me you'd never got 'em neither."

"How do you make that out?"

"I knowed they meant to fight hard in the cavern, as they showed by picking off a couple

of your warriors, but I got 'em to come out and move off up the ravine, knowing sartin sure they would walk into the trap that you had sot for 'em."

Jake Golcher seemed to be astounded at this statement, and his manner showed he was half persuaded there was some truth in it. If the fellow was really a Tory like himself he had no wish to harm him, but he was not fully persuaded, and he turned to Mr. Brainerd.

"You heard what he said, didn't you?"

"Not being deaf, I did."

"Do you know whether he speaks the truth or not?"

"I don't know, and what's more I don't care; I know one thing, he didn't render us the slightest help, and in my opinion there is only one bigger coward and scoundrel in the country, and that's yourself."

Mr. Brainerd looked the Tory straight in the eye as he uttered these defiant words, and the latter winced under the indignation of an honest man.

Golcher stood for a moment irresolute, his

eye wandering up and down the line, until it happened to rest on Aunt Peggy.

"Oh, don't you wink at me that way, you scand'lous villain," she exclaimed, shaking her head; "if you say a word to me, or come any nearer, I'll scratch your eyes out!"

The Tory moved a little farther off.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

FRED GODFREY, as may well be supposed, was amazed at the words of Habakkuk McEwen, but he believed the fellow was simply descending to this subterfuge in the hope of saving his life.

Understanding the nature of the man as well as he did, he could not find fault, and he made an effort to help him, without telling a clear untruth.

"I can say that before and after I joined my friends, he behaved very differently from the others."

"How?"

"He was asked to do several things for their benefit and refused, and he favored this attempt to get away by leaving the place where we had taken shelter in the rocks."

"That's because he was too cowardly to do anything else," broke in Mr. Brainerd.

"Did he fire either of those shots that brought down a couple of our men?"

"I believe not—did he, Mr. Brainerd?"

"No; he can't shoot well enough to hit a flock of barns ten feet off, and he shivered so with fear he couldn't hold his gun in hand."

"That's a lie!" exclaimed Habakkuk, who began to feel hopeful; "I had a dozen chances to pick off some of the red men and I wouldn't do it, 'cause I was their friend."

"Wal, I'll 'tend to you after a while," said Golcher, puzzled by the turn matters had taken. "You folks may sit down on the log a while, and I'll 'tend to another matter."

During this curious conversation the Senecas were grouped on the other side of the camp-fire, so that the faces of captors as well as captured were shown in the glare of the blaze, upon which more wood was flung.

Fred Godfrey regretted this, having resolved to make a break whenever the chance presented itself, for there was no mercy to be expected for him. The Senecas were impatient, and he was well aware that Jake Gol-

cher hated him with a hatred that would stop at nothing in the way of suffering.

If convinced that the death of a soldier would be his, he would have stayed and died, like the brave youth he was.

But once away and he might do something for those who were dearer to him than his own life.

While he stood listening to the conversation recorded, he sought to finish that which he had tried to accomplish all the way thither—that was, to loosen the bonds that held his elbows and wrists as if they were bound with iron.

He could not make any progress, and he began to feel as though he had deferred the step too long. He thought to have overturned his immediate guards, and dashed in the woods, before reaching the camp of the Senecas.

This was destined to be an eventful night to all concerned. The Tory had taken a step toward Maggie Brainerd, with the manifest intention of addressing her, when a new-comer appeared on the scene, in the person of an Indian runner from the other side of the river.

It was evident he came from high authori-

ties, with orders. From what followed, it is probable that the leaders of the Indians and Tories felt there was need of additional forces on the western bank, to complete the work of which much still remained to do.

Forty Fort, which contained many of the settlers, and women and children, had not yet surrendered, and the massacre could not be completed so long as a remnant of the patriots held out.

That such was the errand of the runner appeared from the fact that he addressed himself directly to Gray Panther, who the next moment summoned Golcher to his side, and the three held a brief conversation.

The captives naturally fixed their attention on them and noticed that they gesticulated, and the Tory indulged in a number of expressions in English that were of a vigorous nature.

Some of the Senecas sauntered over in front of the sorrowful group, and looked at them with natural curiosity. Habakkuk McEwen, on account of his fantastic dress and paint, still attracted the most notice, and some of the

warriors ventured on a remark or two in their own tongue, but he made no answer, and did his utmost to maintain a dignified bearing.

"Habakkuk," said Fred Godfrey, in a low voice, "what did you mean by telling that wretch such a story?"

"Sh! keep quiet," replied McEwen, in an undertone, and without looking toward the one he was addressing; "you know it's my only chance."

There was a moment of silence, when both Fred and his father were disposed to suspect the fellow of treachery, but second thought convinced them that he meant well enough, and was only making a natural effort to gain the favor of the man who held his life in his hands.

It was in accordance with the natural instinct of the fellow, who was more than willing to resort to any artifice that promised to avert the doom hanging over his head.

It is scarcely necessary to say that he was the only one who would ask mercy at the hands of Jake Golcher, or who would pretend any sentiment other than an utter abhorrence of him.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE conference between Golcher and the chief, Gray Panther, was vigorous, even if brief. Orders of such a positive nature had been sent that it was probable neither dared disregard them.

The Seneca chief called eight of his warriors about him, said something in his guttural fashion, and then he and they disappeared in the wood.

It looked as if they had been commanded to cross the river and join the main force on the western bank in some important enterprise.

This left precisely eleven Indians, so far as could be seen, with Jake Golcher to carry out his designs. When Fred Godfrey realized the size of the force, he said in an undertone to his father:

"If we only had our guns now, we could make a good fight against them."

"But we haven't—so what's the use of talking of an impossibility?"

It was apparent to the fugitives, who were watching everything, that Golcher himself was a little uneasy over the shape matters had taken. Instead of going to where the captives were sitting on the fallen tree, he stood apart with two of the warriors, discussing something with as much earnestness as he had talked to Gray Panther.

The meaning of this was soon made plain, when he came over, and, addressing Habakkuk McEwen, said loud, enough for all ears:

"We've concluded to move camp."

"What's that for?" asked the New Englander.

"None of your business," was the reply, given with equal promptness.

The anxiety of McEwen to gain the goodwill of his master, however, would not permit him to hold his peace, and he hastened to interject several questions.

"I say, Jake, ain't you going to unfasten these twists of wood that are cutting my arms almost in two? I think them Injins must

have took a couple of hickory saplings to bind me."

"I ain't satisfied about you, yet," said the Tory, in that hesitating manner that showed he was pretty well convinced that his prisoner, after all, was what he professed to be, although, for some reason, he chose to restrain his indorsement to him.

"Wal, you orter be," growled Habakkuk; "I'm the best Tory in the Wyoming Valley; and this is a purty way to sarve me."

The renegade smiled, as if he rather liked that kind of talk, but he did not make any move to relieve his captive of his bonds. Within the next three minutes the entire party were moving through the wood toward some point of whose locality the prisoners had no idea.

Mr. Brainerd was glad, for he was hopeful it would give Fred the desperate chance for which he was waiting. During the last few minutes the father had regained some degree of hope, and he looked to the daring young lieutenant to give a good account of himself, should any opening appear.

As for Fred, himself, he was on the alert; but it must have been that the subtle Jake Golcher suspected the truth, for he took extreme precaution.

The ladies walked in front this time, with a couple of Indians on either side, McEwen and Brainerd came next, while Fred was honored with four warriors, who were as wide-awake as cats. The one on his right and the one on his left kept a hand on his shoulder, so as to detect the first move; and, as his wrists and his elbows were securely held together, it was inevitable that the first instant he made a break, no matter how skillfully done, that instant he would be killed.

Fred could not fail to see this, and he was too wise to give any pretext for violence toward him.

"They will not keep such close watch all the way," he thought. "We have a considerable distance to walk, and I shall have the chance after a little while—hello!"

To his chagrin the halt was made at that moment.

Hardly had the shadowy figures come to a

standstill, when one of the Senecas dropped on his knees and began using a flint and steel, sending out a shower of sparks like that seen from an emery-wheel. In a few seconds a bright fire was under headway.

The Indians had simply changed their quarters—that was all. The curious thing about it was, the two places were no more than a couple of hundred yards apart, and were so alike that but for the starting of the new fire, the captives would have believed they were the same.

The meaning of this movement was a mystery to those chiefly concerned, but they could do nothing less than accept it.

When the camp-fire was crackling and threw out a bright glow in every direction, the resemblance to the spot just vacated was found to be still more striking.

There was the fallen tree, upon which the companions in captivity seated themselves, looking questioningly in each others' faces, but they now heard the plash and murmur of some small waterfall, that was not in their ears a brief while before. That was about the only

proof that they had really made a change of base.

Under the directions of Jake Golcher, the fuel was heaped upon the fire, so that it was practically mid-day so far as captors and captives were concerned.

Mr. Brainerd looked reproachfully at Fred and said, in a low voice:

"I didn't expect to see *you* here when we stopped."

"And I hoped I wouldn't be, but there has not been the ghost of a chance."

"I don't see when or where we shall get a better one; I don't propose to sit here and let them tomahawk us to death, as Queen Esther did with those poor wretches this afternoon."

"We may not be able to prevent it; but as I made an effort then, so I will this time, when worst comes to worst."

"What in the name of the seven wonders was this change made for?"

"I can scarcely form an idea, but there must have been some cause."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

FOR a time Jake Golcher paid no attention to the whites, but watched the Senecas, while they plied the roaring fire, as though it gave him a good deal of satisfaction.

In counting the Indians, Fred Godfrey saw that two were missing, but before he formed any guess as to the cause of their absence they reappeared, their coming announced by the terrific squealing of a young pig, that they had managed to steal somewhere.

As they entered the circle of light, they were seen to be holding a plump little porker between them, while he struggled fiercely and emitted screams like the shriek of a locomotive whistle.

It was a piece of good fortune that they were enabled to secure such a prize, when so many of the fugitives from Wyoming almost perished with hunger.

The cries of the little porker were soon

hushed in death, and he was dressed with considerable skill. Conveniences not being at hand for scalding him, it became necessary to prepare him for the table without that desirable process.

When he was ready for the coals the latter were raked out, and Aunt Peggy was invited to come forward and display her skill.

"I'd like to see me cook for you scand'lous villains," she snapped out; "I would do it if I had a lot of p'ison to put in the meat, but not otherwise."

Her refusal probably would have ended in serious consequences to herself, but Mr. Brainerd and Maggie urged her to comply, all saying they were extremely hungry, and in no other way would they be able to secure any food.

In deference to their wishes she stepped forward, and, being furnished with a keen hunting-knife by one of the warriors, plied it with the skill for which she became famous years before.

The pig was in prime condition, and, if properly prepared, would have made an enjoyable delicacy for the table.

But time and circumstances did not favor elaborate cookery, and Aunt Peggy, in grim silence, cut off slices that were nicely broiled by being skewered with green sticks, and held over the glowing coals.

In a few minutes a thin steak was browned and ready for the palate.

"I'll take that, old woman," said Jake Golcher, reaching out for it.

"I'd like to see you get it," said the lady, whipping it away from him; "you good-for-nothing, scand'lous villain, don't you know that ladies orter be waited on fust?"

And with these scarifying words, she walked over to Maggie and Eva, and, cutting the steak in two, handed half to each.

"That's just what I was going to do," growled Golcher, annoyed by the broad grin that illuminated Caucasian and American faces alike.

"You know it's a falsehood," replied aunt Peggy, in the same peppery style; "you're too mean ever to think of anything decent and Christian-like, you vagabond—oh-h-h-h, how I ache to get hold of you!"

The Tory fought rather shy of her, for in sooth she was a lady to be dreaded.

Eva Brainerd walked straight to where her father sat, and said:

"Papa, I shall not eat a mouthful until you do."

"I can't eat very conveniently with my hands tied behind me, but I shall never consent to devour that and allow you to go hungry."

"But I can get more of Aunt Peggy."

"Perhaps so and perhaps not."

"Then we will eat it between us. There, you take a bite and I will do the same, and we will keep it up until nothing is left."

"That *is* a good arrangement," replied her parent, smiling at the ingenuity of the affectionate child, and complying with her request.

He took a good mouthful, and she followed. Eva forced the last bit upon her father, who, in spite of himself, was compelled to eat fully two-thirds of the piece, which, after all, was the proper thing to do.

Before the feast was finished Aunt Peggy had another slice ready, which was handed

over to Maggie, who walked directly to where Fred Godfrey sat on the log.

"Brother Fred, this is for *you*."

He consented to share it with her as their parent was doing with little Eva, and of course she complied.

While this scene was going on the Indians were lolling near at hand, smoking their pipes, and exchanging a few guttural grunts. They were all on the ground, evidently in a more patient mood than Jake Golcher, who stood a short distance back from the camp-fire, scowling and angry, that he should be compelled to stand still and see the captives fed, while he was hungry and unable to obtain a mouthful.

Even Habakkuk McEwen was not forgotten, Maggie ministering to his wants, though, of course, she did not alternate the feasting as she did with Fred. Habakkuk asked her to do so, but she refused so pointedly that he did not repeat the request.

"This is interesting," muttered the angered Tory to himself, as he looked on; "that pig belongs to us, and we've got to set back and

let them rebels swaller it before our eyes. I'll be hanged if I'll stand it."

He was fast working up to a dangerous point of anger, which was not mollified when he noticed that Aunt Peggy herself now and then placed a large piece in her mouth, after which her jaws worked with great vigor.

"See here, old woman," he called out, "that pork don't belong to you, and I reckon it's about time the owner got some."

He did not approach her, but he looked as savage as a sharpened tomahawk.

Aunt Peggy made no reply and acted as though she heard him not; but, had any one noticed her closely, he would have seen her jaws working more energetically than ever, while her eyes took on a little sharper gleam than before.

She, too, was rapidly reaching an explosive mood, although the particular individual against whom she felt the rising anger failed to take warning.

"She's the worst hag I ever seen," muttered Jake, glancing askance at her, but still keeping a respectful distance.

The Senecas sat somewhat apart in the same lolling attitudes, and some of them looked as if they anticipated what was coming.

A minute later, Aunt Peggy finished another slice, which she asked Maggie to take.

"Thank you, auntie, we have enough," replied our heroine, Eva saying the same.

"I think I could eat a few pounds more," remarked Habakkuk, "but I would prefer to see Mr. Golcher get something. He is a good fellow, and orter been sarved first."

"If none of you want it, I'll eat it myself," observed the ancient maiden, who thereupon began disposing of it.

"That's gone about fur enough!" exclaimed Golcher, striding toward her; "some folks haven't got no gratertude, and I'll teach you—"

As he uttered this threat, or rather partly uttered it, he was at Aunt Peggy's elbow in a wrathful mood. All at once, she whirled about, and sprang at him like a tigress.

"You'll teach me manners, will you? There! Take *that!* and THAT!"

The attack was so unexpected that Golcher threw up his empty hands in a weak way, and lowered his head, closing his eyes and trying to retreat, but she had grasped his long, straggling hair, and it came out by the handfuls.

Instantly all was confusion. Mr. Brainerd laughed, and the Senecas, as they sprang to their feet, made no effort to interfere. Indeed, there was strong reason to believe they enjoyed the strange scene.

Aunt Peggy scratched and pulled with the most commendable enthusiasm, and her victim howled with pain.

"Take her off!" he shouted, "or she will kill me!"

Eva and Maggie ran forward, but the Indians actually laughed, and the two girls were unable to restrain her until she had spent her vengeance. Her victim was in a sorry plight, and in his blind retreat he tumbled backward over the log, springing instantly to his feet, and actually dashing off in the darkness.

"There!" gasped Aunt Peggy, "I've been aching to get my hands on you, and now I feel better!"

At this juncture several of the Senecas uttered excited exclamations, for the discovery was made that during the hubbub one of the prisoners had escaped, and his name was Fred Godfrey.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

AUNT PEGGY CAREY "builded better than she knew."

In her fierce attack on the Tory she administered well-merited punishment, leaving him in a demoralized condition, so thoroughly whipped, indeed, that for several minutes he was dazed and not himself.

Her friends trembled to think of the vengeance he would visit upon her for the act, but the good lady herself seemed to have no apprehensions, and, turning about, she carefully arranged her hair and bonnet, and resumed cooking slices from the carcass of the pig, intending now to wait upon the Senecas, who had been kind enough not to interfere while she attended to the other important duty.

What the next step would have been was hard to guess, but for the sudden discovery which we have made known.

One of the captives was found to be missing,

and he was the most important of all, being no less a personage than Lieutenant Fred Godfrey.

The instant Aunt Peggy assailed Golcher the youth saw that the opportunity for which he was waiting had come, and he took advantage of it.

The uproar for the moment was great. The captives on the log sprang to their feet, and the Senecas fixed their attention on the couple, seeing which, Mr. Brainerd said to his son:

"*Now's your time, Fred!*"

He turned as he spoke, and saw the lieutenant vanishing like a shot in the gloom. When the warriors noted his absence, he was at a safe distance in the wood.

Fully a half-dozen Senecas sprang off in the darkness, using every effort to recapture the prisoner, who could be at no great distance, no matter how fast he had traveled.

Had Fred given away to the excitement of the occasion, and lost that coolness that had stood him so well more than once on that dreadful afternoon and evening, he hardly would have escaped recapture before he went

a hundred yards; for the Iroquois were so accustomed to the ways of the woods, they would have seized such advantage and come upon him while he was in the immediate neighborhood.

They believed he would continue running and stumbling in the darkness, and thus betray his whereabouts.

And that is precisely what Fred Godfrey did not do.

He ran with all speed through the woods, tripping and picking himself up, and struggling forward, until he was far beyond the reach of the light of the camp-fire, when all at once he caught the signal whoops of the Indians, and he knew they were after him.

Then, instead of keeping on in his flight, he straightened up and stepped along with extreme caution, literally feeling every foot of the way.

Thus it was he avoided betraying his situation to the cunning warriors, who, in their apparently aimless pursuit, used their ears, and indeed every sense at their command.

It was because Fred himself did the same

that he eluded those on his track. Listening, he heard the approach of one of the Iroquois. Instead of hurrying away he stopped, and backing against a tree, stood as motionless as the trunk itself.

The dense summer vegetation overhead prevented a single beam of moonlight reaching him, so that he was secure from observation, so long as he retained his self-possession and made no blunder.

His nerves were under a fearful strain within the next three minutes, for, as if guided by fate, not one but two of the Senecas dashed through the wood, and instead of going by, halted not more than six feet from where he stood.

Why they should have stopped thus was more than he could conjecture, unless they really knew where he was and were sure they could place their hands on him when they wished.

It was hard to understand how this could be, and Fred refused to believe it, though the actions of the Indians were certainly remarkable.

What more trying situation could there be? It was like some nightmare in which the victim sees the foe swiftly approaching and is without the power to move so much as a finger.

But Fred did not lose heart. If they had learned where he was, he meant to use his feet and not to yield so long as he could resist.

He tugged at his bonds, but they were fastened so securely that he could not start them. To loosen them so as to free his hands must necessarily be the work of some time, and he knew how it could be done, when he should be free of his enemies.

But the bonds, when two of the Senecas were at his elbow, were torture, and but for his strength of will he could not have avoided an outcry.

Fortunately, the suspense lasted but a few minutes. The Indians stood silent as if listening, and during that ordeal Fred scarcely drew his breath.

Then they exchanged some words in the gruff, exclamatory style peculiar to the red men, and again they paused and listened.

The other pursuers could be heard at differ-

ent points, for most of them uttered several cautious but well-understood signals, some of which were answered by the two at Fred's elbow.

"Why should they stop here," thought he, "when they have every reason to think I am threshing through the wood and getting farther away each minute?"

Just then they began moving off, and immediately after, he caught the dim outlines of their figures as they crossed an open space and vanished in the woods beyond.

Fred Godfrey did not stir for several minutes, but at the end of that time he became satisfied that his whereabouts were unknown to the Senecas ranging through the wilderness in search of him, and he ventured to leave the tree.

CHAPTER XL.

FOR a single minute Mr. Brainerd was on the point of following in the footsteps of Fred, and making a break for freedom: that was at the height of the general confusion, when the majority of the Indians started in pursuit.

Possibly such a prompt course might have succeeded, but he allowed the critical moment to pass, through fear that some additional cruelty would be visited on the heads of those whom he left behind.

When Aunt Peggy resumed her culinary operations, the patriots sat down again on the log, excited and fearful that the events of the last few minutes would precipitate the crisis they had been dreading for hours.

Habakkuk McEwen was alarmed, but he could do nothing more than give expressions to his sympathy for the victim of the old

lady's wrath, while he regretted, with an anguish which cannot be described, his failure to get away with Fred Godfrey, who, as it seemed to the New Englander, was the born favorite of fortune.

"Thank God!" was the fervent exclamation of Mr. Brainerd, as he compressed his lips, "Fred is beyond their reach."

"Are you sure of that?" asked Maggie.

"Sure of it!" repeated her parent, turning his gaze on her, while he smiled grimly. "Of course I am. When he escaped the clutches of Queen Esther to-day he had no darkness to help him, and the rascals were at his heels. Yet he got away safely, and he never would have fallen into their hands again but for his anxiety to help us. Now he is out there somewhere in the woods, where it is as dark as Egypt, and do you suppose he is the fool to allow them to take him again? Not by a long shot."

Maggie was immeasurably relieved to hear these words of her parent, which, it may be said, removed every fear for her brother from her thoughts.

"But, father," she added, "what can he do, with his arms bound?"

"Faugh! what's that? We are tied with green withes or vines that hurt like the mischief, but it will take only a few minutes to rub them against the corner of a stone or rock and separate them. Have no fears about Fred," continued her father, "these red skins can whoop and yell, and howl and crack their heels together, but they'll never have another such a chance to scalp Fred Godfrey as they had a little while ago."

Relieved of this dread, Maggie's anxieties were centered upon her friends.

Her heart bled for her father, who sat as proudly upright and defiant as though at the head of a brigade of men; but she could only pray and utter brave words, in the hope of cheering him.

Poor Eva was so terrified that she cried continually. She clung to her beloved parent, and, fortunately, as yet none of her captors made any objection. She was determined to stay by him to the last.

The American Indian admires bravery as

much as does his civilized enemy, and it needed no student of human nature to see that the few who remained were as much disgusted as amused with the sorry figure cut by their Tory leader in his affray with Aunt Peggy Carey.

This was proven by their refusal to interfere, and by the grins that appeared among them when the comedy was going on. But they were under the leadership of the same Tory, and, when he came stumbling back from his fall over the log, and the lady resumed culinary operations, the Senecas became as owlishly glum as seems to be their nature.

They were helped in this feeling by the flight of Lieutenant Godfrey, the prisoner most prized. As it was, the entire party came near starting for the young man, but, unfortunately, they checked themselves in time to prevent a stampede on the part of the rest of the captives.

Jake Golcher, as we have said, came back dazed and pretty well subdued. A great deal of his straggling hair had been removed by

Aunt Peggy, and his countenance gridironed by her vigorous finger-nails.

He dropped down in a collapsed condition at one end of the log, removed from the captives, who, like the Indians, looked at him askance, half disposed to laugh outright, despite the alarming danger.

In the mean time, Aunt Peggy was broiling the slices of tender pig with such care that she had a couple finished.

"There," she exclaimed, as she tossed the two in the direction of the Senecas, "I like to see hog eat hog, and you might as well begin."

The facetious red men scrambled, like a lot of school-boys after a handful of marbles, and had they been so many wolves, the food could hardly have disappeared with greater celerity.

Paying no attention to the Tory, who sat on the fallen tree with his head drooping forward and his eyes fixed on nothing, the warriors started a curious scene.

Approaching quite close to Aunt Peggy, they crowded and pushed each other, eagerly wait-

ing when she should be ready to fling them the prize for which their stomachs yearned.

All were on their feet, and their black eyes, and quick, fidgeting movements, showed that their souls were in the business, or fun, as it might be termed.

There can be little question that, incredible as it may seem, the action of Aunt Peggy had rendered her somewhat of a favorite with the Indians. It is just such people who admire the vim and bravery of any one—especially when not expected.

There can be no means of knowing, and yet it is safe to suspect, that the most reverential of these Senecas was the warrior who had received such a ringing slap in the face when he dared to touch his painted lips to the virgin cheek of Aunt Peggy.

Such is human nature the world over. The red men laughed and tumbled about, as they scrambled for the bits of meat, while even Aunt Peggy's features relaxed into a grim smile, when she looked upon the amusing performance.

It was no more than natural that as she had

gone up in the estimation of these dusky warriors, the one who had been vanquished sank correspondingly low.

Strange complications might result from this condition of affairs.

Perhaps a dozen or more slices of the pig were broiled and tossed among the struggling red men, by which time their appetites were so well attended to that they lost a great deal of the vigor with which in the first place they scrambled for the food.

But during this same time, which was only a few minutes, Jake Golcher was rapidly regaining a correct idea of the situation, and it was not long before he raised his head and surveyed the scene with interest.

He straightened up and watched them a brief while, when the stinging scratches on his face reminded him of the episode in which he had cut such a sorry figure.

"She beats ten thousand wildcats," he muttered, glaring at Aunt Peggy, who just then was smiling at the efforts of the Indians to seize the slice of young pork she tossed toward them.

"I don't understand how it was she knocked the spots out of me in that style; it must have been her awful temper, and because she come at me afore I knowed anything about it."

Very probably the causes named had much to do with the result.

"Why didn't some of them Senecas pull her off? It's just like 'em to be pleased with it, and I'm sure the rebels busted themselves with laughter to see me catch it."

Jake Golcher seemed to be quite correct in gauging the feelings of those around him.

Sitting on the fallen tree, he muttered:

"These warriors have all been put under me, and they've got to do what I tell 'em to do; we've played the fool too long in sparing 'em. They ought to have been put out of the way before this. Let me see—I'll fix it this way."

He first looked at Aunt Peggy, toward whom he felt a hatred inconceivable to any one not in his situation.

"I'll settle with *her* for this; it will be just like the Senecas to refuse to burn her at a tree, because she is such a she-panther; but I'll give

her a touch of the knife myself, that will prevent her ever pulling out half my hair agin.

"I'll keep the two gals there, for they'll stick together, and I'm bound to bring that proud Maggie Brainerd to terms. If she'll do the right thing by me I'll let up on her father that I hate worse than p'ison. As for that long-legged Habakkuk, I don't know what to think of him; it may be he's one of us, though I have my doubts. I'll wait and see; but won't I level things up with that 'ere Fred Godfrey? Wal, I should rather guess so. I'll make sure he's out of the way. I s'pose he's sittin' over there wondering when his turn is comin'. He won't be kept wondering long."

Wishing to gratify his nature, he leaned forward and peered around Mr. Brainerd to see how Fred Godfrey was taking it.

But he failed to discover the young man.

Making sure he was not on the log, Golcher rose to his feet and stared here and there in a hurried search for the youth.

He was invisible, and, with a vague fear, the Tory strode to Mr. Brainerd.

"Where's that son of yours?"

"Well, sir," was the response, "I judge that by this time he's about half a mile away in the woods, and safely beyond the reach of all the warriors and Tories that ever had their hair yanked out by an elderly lady not in the enjoyment of very rugged health!"

CHAPTER XLI.

IT need not be said that Fred Godfrey improved his opportunity to the utmost.

Having eluded the Senecas who were so close behind him, it was not likely he would run any risk of being caught on their return. In fact, he might have considered himself beyond danger, and yet the narrowest escape of all occurred only a few minutes afterward.

Anxious to gain the utmost time possible, he was picking his way with great care, when he stepped upon a stone that turned under his foot, and he narrowly escaped falling.

Immediately he caught a birdlike call near him, and his quick wit told him it was a signal from one of the warriors searching for him.

Fred made an abrupt turn, and going a rod or two, halted precisely as before—that is beneath a large tree, and stood close against the trunk.

And standing thus, he noticed the same sound once more, this time answered from a point directly behind him.

He could do nothing but stand still, and he knew how to do that equal to a living statue. Only a few yards in front was an open space, where the moonlight revealed objects without exposing himself to observation.

Thus it was that the youth detected two Indians, who came out of the wood on the other side and stopped, as if they were posing for inspection. They talked for some minutes in their own tongue, gesticulating earnestly, and then walked toward him.

He quickly shifted his position to the other side of the tree and peered around, but, when they came into the shadow, nothing could be seen of them.

"I believe they know where I am," thought he, "and are amusing themselves at my expense."

Such seemed to be the case, for once more the red men stopped and were actually within reach of him. Since the arms of the latter were still fastened behind him, it can well be

understood how he dreaded discovery, his chief fear being that the painful throbbing of his heart would betray him.

But the good fortune that had attended him on the other side the river did not desert him now. The Senecas hovered about him only a minute or two and then moved away, this time taking a direction that led toward the camp-fire—an indication that they had given up the pursuit.

Pausing only long enough for them to pass beyond hearing, Fred resumed his flight, with the same care he had used from the first.

He was now more hopeful than ever, but almost instantly received another warning that it is never safe to shout until you are "out of the woods."

He judged he was fully two hundred yards from the camp-fire which he had left so hurriedly, when he found himself in such darkness that he once more stopped until he could gather some idea of his location and of the points of the compass.

Listening closely, he caught the gentle flow of the small waterfall and of the Susquehanna

on his right, from which direction also came the occasional reports of guns and the shouts of Indians. This convinced him he was facing south, and that his back was turned toward his friends.

It was no pleasant discovery to find the same ominous sounds proceeding from his own side the river; but, having left them in such a situation, this alarming fact was scarcely noticed.

"The first thing for me to do is to get these withes off my arms and wrists," he said, poking around with his feet for some sharp-cornered stone. "I've stood this—"

To his dismay, a figure approached in the gloom. There were just enough scattering rays of moonlight to show it, and its movements made certain the fact that he (the stranger) had discovered him.

"I shall have to use my feet," was the thought of Fred, as he braced himself; "and I will give him a kick that will do something—"

"Am dat you, leftenant?" came in the form of a husky whisper, as the figure stopped a

few feet away and tried to peer through the gloom.

Fred Godfrey almost shouted with delight, for the question revealed the identity of Gravity Gimp.

"Thank Heaven!" was the exclamation of the young man. "I hadn't the remotest idea of meeting you, Gravity."

"Let's shake on it," chuckled the African, groping forward with his huge palm, which he shoved into the face of the pleased Fred, who said:

"If you'll be kind enough to cut these bonds that hold my arms immovable, I'll shake both hands."

"Of course; where am dey?" asked the equally happy negro, poking around with his immense jack-knife. "I'se so glorious dat you mus' 'scuse me if I cut off de wrong things. I can't hold myself. Dar, I knowed it!" he added, slashing away; "dat's your leg dat I have hold of, and I do b'leve dat I've cut it half off. Begs pardon, leftenant, and I'll hit it after a while."

But no such blunder had been committed,

and, under the manipulation of the jack-knife, the withes that had bound the arms of Fred Godfrey were speedily cut, and he swung his hands about and sawed the air with great relief.

"My gracious! but that's good!" he exclaimed. "I was so wretched that I believe I would have gone wild if I hadn't been freed."

"Why didn't you gnaw 'em off?" said Gimp. "You've got good 'nough teeth to walk right through anything like dat."

"That may be, Gravity; but with my hands tied behind me, I couldn't very well get at them with my teeth."

"I didn't thunk ob dat—but you could hab fixed it easy 'nough."

"In what way?"

"Jes' stood on your head—dat was de way to reach 'em."

CHAPTER XLII.

IT is idle to attempt to picture the feelings of Jake Golcher, when he learned from Mr. Brainerd, one of the captives, that Fred Godfrey had escaped but a few minutes before.

Weakly hoping there was some mistake, he turned to one of the Indians and demanded the truth. He got it in the shape of information that several of the fleetest warriors were hunting for the fugitive, and there was hope he would be brought in speedily.

The renegade stood a few seconds, and then began striding up and down in front of the camp-fire, indulging in imprecations too frightful to be recorded.

All this time Mr. Brainerd was so delighted that he forgot his own grief. He knew how great was the disappointment of the man, and he was pleased thereat, for, recalling the chastisement received from the hands of Aunt

Peggy, it can be safely said that matters had gone ill with Golcher, since the lady began cooking for her captors.

By and by he exhausted himself, and then paused in front of Habakkuk McEwen and demanded:

"Why didn't you stop him when you seen him running away?"

"I didn't see him," was the truthful reply of the fellow, who was mean enough to add: "If I had, you can just bet I'd stopped him, even if my hands was tied."

"Why didn't you yell for me as soon as you found out he had gone?"

"I did yell," was the unblushing answer, "but there was so much confusion nobody noticed me, and the Injins was off after him as quick as he started."

"Just then Aunt Peggy was attending to you," Mr. Brainerd remarked, "and you were were so badly used up that you wouldn't have noticed an earthquake had it come along."

Maggie looked beseechingly at her father, while the Tory glowered on him like a thunder-cloud.

But for his anxiety to win the good will of the pretty maiden, he would have struck down her parent where he stood. The latter acted as though he had given up all hope, and was trying to retaliate to some extent on him whom he detested.

"See here," said Habakkuk, with a flirt of his head and a confidential air, "ain't you going to cut them things that are tied about my arms?"

"What'll we do that for?"

"So's to let me loose," was the logical answer; "you know, Jakey—"

"There, don't call me Jakey," interrupted the Tory.

"Well, Mr. Golcher—"

"Make it plain 'Jake.'"

"Well, Jake, as I was going to say, I'm your friend, and have been ever since I knowed you, and you know it; if you'll let me loose I'll 'list under you; I'm already got up Injin style, and will sarve as one of your advanced scouts."

"Shet up?" interrupted Golcher; "I don't b'leve you're anything more than a rebel, and

if we'd done as we orter, the whole caboodle of you would have been wiped out before the sun went down."

While the Tory was indulging in these expressions he continually glanced at Maggie Brainerd, occasionally taking a step toward her. It is at such times that a woman is quick to perceive the truth, and with the natural instinct of her sex, she looked at him in turn, and with that smile of hers that was really resistless, said:

"Jake, come here a minute, please."

In a flutter of surprise, he approached, with a smirking grin.

"What can I do for you, dear Maggie?"

"I'll be much obliged if you will cut those bonds which trouble father. He has suffered so much to-day that he is irritable, and I hope you will pardon him."

This was an audacious request, and took Golcher aback somewhat, but there was no refusing the prayer.

So, with the best grace possible, he stepped forward, hunting-knife in hand, and cut first the wire-like withes that held Habakkuk

McEwen fast, and then did the same with those of Mr. Brainerd.

"I'm very much obliged," said the grateful Habakkuk; "you're very kind, and after this I'm your servant."

Angry as was Mr. Brainerd, he had better sense than to quarrel with his good fortune, and he thanked the man who loosened his arms, while at the same time he concluded to hold his peace for the time.

"Fred is beyond their reach," he thought, "and so is Gravity Gimp, and I judge one of them had a gun. True, that isn't much, but there is no saying what will be done with it, for both are as brave men as ever stood in battle.

"If Fred only had the chance, he would be heard from very soon. But there is none whom he can rally to our help. Ah, if he could but pick up a half-dozen soldiers, what a raid he would make through this camp! But wherever there are any of our soldiers they are wounded, killed, or so scared that they are an element of weakness.

"I can not help feeling some hope, and yet

my reason tells me that there is no ground on which to base it."

Having complied with the request of Maggie Brainerd, Golcher felt authorized to approach her with a statement of his own proposition. Accordingly, he walked to the farther end of the log, and motioned for her to join him. She thought it best to comply, and did so, sitting down within a foot or two of him.

"You see," he said, with his smirk, "I've done what you axed me to do."

"You have, and I thank you for it."

"That's all right; there ain't nothin' mean about me, for all some folks choose to slander me. Now, I s'pose you'd like to have your father and the rest of them folks let go?"

"I have been praying for that ever since the Indians captured us."

"Wall, I've been thinking 'bout settin' you all loose to take care of yourselves."

"Oh, if you do, Mr. Golcher—"

"Thar, thar," he interrupted, with a wave of the hand; "call me 'Jake' when you speak to me."

"I'll be grateful to you, Jake, as long as I live, and so will they."

"That's all very well; but gratertude ain't going to do me much good," said Jake, with another grin. "I orter have some reward, Maggie."

"So you will; the reward of an approving conscience, which is beyond the price of rubies."

"I know all 'bout that," said he, slinging one leg over the other, after which he nursed the upper knee and swayed the foot back and forth; "but that don't satisfy me. I want more."

"We have a little farm, you know; I'll give you my share in that, and father, I'm sure, will pay you everything he can get together."

"Yes, but that ain't enough, Maggie."

"What else can we do?" she asked, despairingly, while her sex's intuition told her what he was hinting at.

"I want *you*," he said, bending his head close to her, while she recoiled; "if you'll be my wife, I'll let your father, Eva, yourself,

and even Aunt Peggy, go; if you don't, the Senecas shall tomahawk them all."

Maggie Brainerd knew this was coming, and she asked herself whether it was not her duty to be offered up as a sacrifice, to save her beloved friends. Would there be any more heroism in doing so than had been displayed before by thousands of her sex?

She was prayerfully considering the question, when her indignant father, who had heard it all, broke in with:

"Tell him no—a thousand times no! If you don't, you are no daughter of mine!"

CHAPTER XLIII.

GRAVITY GIMP and Lieutenant Fred Godfrey were in high spirits, for each had been highly favored by fortune. They were beyond sight of the camp-fire and had thrown the pursuing Iroquois off the track, so that, with ordinary care, they were out of personal danger.

But this elation could not last. Could they forget that within a stone's throw their friends were in peril, and unless soon rescued would be beyond all help?

"We have only one gun between us," said Fred, "and I don't see any prospect of getting another."

"I thinked maybe we mought find one, somewhar in de woods," said Gimp, "but I guess dere ain't much show for dat. You am de best shot, so I'll be wery much obleeged if you'll take charge ob dis rifle."

Fred accepted the weapon, feeling that before any great harm could befall those in the Indian camp, the bullet nestling in the barrel would be heard from.

"We will steal up as near as we dare," said he, "and watch our chances."

"I doesn't see dat I can assist you, to a wery alarming extent," said Gimp, "so if you doesn't object, I'll go on a scout."

"Go on a scout? What do you mean by that?"

"Ise an ijee; I'll take a look around, and when I want you I'll just whistle this way, and you'll understand."

Fred had little faith in the proposal, but fortunately he did not object, and a minute later Gimp was gone.

Left to himself Fred stealthily approached the vicinity of the camp, fully alive to the delicacy of his mission.

He was resolved that if detected, and this was likely to occur, since a number of the Senecas were still absent and would soon be returning, he would not be retaken.

"There will not be a shadow of hope, if I

fall into their hands again, and I may as well make it lively for a while."

A few steps farther and he reached a point from which he obtained a clear view of the Indian camp.

He saw Aunt Peggy busy with her culinary duties, while the group of half a dozen Indians were as eagerly watching and scrambling for the brown slices as if they were so many wolves.

By and by Jake Golcher cut the withes that bound the arms of Habakkuk McEwen and Mr. Brainerd, and began talking with Maggie while Fred watched with the deepest interest the singular camp.

"I think there'll be some mischief done pretty soon," thought the youth, after watching the scene for a moment; "and, if so, I must take a hand."

He had stationed himself by the side of a tree with large spreading limbs, and he now resorted to the odd plan of climbing a short distance and seating himself among the limbs.

"I've got just as good a view here," he said

to himself, "and, if it becomes necessary to shoot, they won't be apt to look in this place for me."

At the same time it occurred to him that if the flash of his gun should be noticed, and his whereabouts discovered, he would be in the worst possible situation.

Parting the limbs, so as to give him the view he wished, he held his weapon ready to fire any instant, while he closely watched proceedings.

No better aim could have been required than that now given him; he could cover every one in the party, and the distance was so short that it was impossible to miss.

"I ought to shoot him," he muttered, as he looked at Jake Golcher, while sitting by Maggie Brainerd and talking with such earnestness; "it is he who has followed us, and but for him the party would be well out of danger by this time."

The young lieutenant was angry enough to shoot a dozen Tories, had the chance been his; but when he sighted along the gleaming barrel of his rifle, on which the firelight fell, he could not bring himself to the point.

"Yes; I ought to do it," he added, "but I can't feel right in picking off a man in that fashion. No; I'll wait till he gives me a better excuse."

The watcher knew what passed between Maggie, Golcher, and Mr. Brainerd, when the last came up and uttered his indignant protest, almost as well as if he had overheard the words themselves.

"Jake has proposed to let the whole party off, provided Maggie will marry him, and before she can decide (for he knows if she makes the promise she will keep it, if they both live), father is giving the Tory a piece of his mind. He's doing it in a style, too, that can't be misunderstood."

This little scene lasted but a few seconds, when Mr. Brainerd resumed his seat on the log, close to his daughter, as if he would protect her from any more such advances.

All this was noted and understood by the watcher in the tree, when the latter was recalled to his own situation by a slight rustling below. Looking down, he was able to see by the light of the camp-fire the figure of a

Seneca Indian, as he walked softly in the direction of the camp.

No doubt he was one of the warriors that had been hunting for Fred, and who failed to find him.

The latter was so near his enemies that he could follow the motions of the Indian until he joined his comrades, or, rather, went up to Golcher, who straightway began questioning him about the search for the young patriot.

Whatever their answers might have been, it is scarcely to be presumed they added much to the peace of mind of Mr. Jacob Golcher.

CHAPTER XLIV.

AFTER the indignant protest of Mr. Brainerd, Jake Golcher concluded to let the matter rest for the time.

"The old fellow is pretty sassy and independent, but I'll take it out of him before he's two hours older. I wish Black Turtle would come in."

He referred to one of the most treacherous and cruel warriors of the Seneca tribe—a savage whose atrocities had given him prominence even among a people noted for their cruelty, and the identical redskin who was in his mind at that moment came out of the wood and approached the Tory leader.

Black Turtle was the warrior who passed under the tree in which Fred Godfrey was perched.

Golcher now believed that he had been lenient, and he resolved to force the issue that had already been delayed too long. Without

heeding the other warriors, who were laughing and scrambling for the slices of meat, Black Turtle at once went up to the white man, with whom he held a brief but pointed conversation.

He first told that they had hunted hard for the Yengese, or Yankee, and had failed to find him—a piece of superfluous information, and then Black Turtle, who seemed to be a subordinate chief, asked in an angry voice why the whites sitting on the log had been spared so long.

On the other side the river the Indians allowed few of the Yengese to live any longer than they could survive the blows of the tomahawk, and there was no reason why such partiality should be shown these who had crossed the Susquehanna.

This declaration was supplemented by the warrior drawing his tomahawk, and announcing that he meant to finish the job at once.

But this was a little more than Jake Golcher wished. There was one of the captives, at least, whom he desired to protect until certain, one way or the other, about her disposition toward him.

If her father were removed, the Tory believed the daughter could be brought to terms through her affection for her sister and aunt.

"So long as the old chap is alive," reflected Golcher, "so long will he prevent her consent. But, if he is gone, and she finds that the only way to save Eva and her aunt is to accept me, she will do it, though there will be a big lot of blubbering and praying and all that sort of stuff. Therefore, the best thing is to get her father out of her path: she will be pretty well broke up by that."

It was now necessary that Black Turtle should be appeased in some way, and Jake Golcher, without hesitation, made known his purpose.

It was, in short, that Black Turtle should move off in the woods, as if he had no thought of evil in his mind, and when beyond sight, make a stealthy circuit, so as to get in the rear of the parties sitting on the log.

He was then to steal up and drive his tomahawk into the skull of the unsuspecting Mr. Brainerd. The Indian would utter his whoop, if so inclined (the disposition to whoop at such

a time is irresistible with his race), and dart off in the woods.

He was to stay until matters should become quiet around the camp-fire, when he might come back and play the innocent warrior, or the avenger, as he chose.

Black Turtle entered upon the dreadful business with the cunning peculiar to his nature. He sauntered off in another direction, passing by the group of Senecas on the other side of the fire, without so much as drawing an inquiring look from them.

Fred Godfrey, from his perch in the tree, saw this action of the redskin, but with no suspicion of its meaning.

He thought he would probably continue his hunt for the lieutenant, whom he, and all the others, had not been able to find.

The conduct of Jake Golcher was as cruel as that of Black Turtle. Without resenting the indignant words of Mr. Brainerd, who seated himself beside Maggie and tried to cheer her, the Tory sauntered off and stood grimly watching the curious actions of some of the warriors, who were still struggling for the

crumbs that fell from Aunt Peggy's aboriginal table.

He thought it best not to say anything more to the fugitives. He had made a blunder, and no words of his just then could right it. He had decided that there had been already too much talk, and it was time for action to take its place.

The position of the Tory was such that he could see every one in camp, but he glowered out from his ugly brows on the mournful party that still sat on the fallen tree, and not only at them, but he was watching the wood immediately behind Mr. Brainerd.

He knew the point where Black Turtle would be likely to appear, and he did not wish to miss the tragedy.

"Things look rather curious there," muttered Lieutenant Godfrey, from his perch in the branches of the tree. "Why is Jake Golcher watching the folks so closely? Is there some mischief afloat?"

At that instant he detected a movement in the undergrowth behind Brainerd, the position of Fred being the best possible to see what was going on in that spot.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

"But Black Turtle made a slight mistake."

The firelight was thrown over the fallen tree, and reached some distance beyond, so that the figure of Black Turtle, as he rose like a shadow to his feet, was plainly shown.

One glance at the warrior told the whole truth to the watcher, whose gun was already cocked and pointed in that direction.

Black Turtle had selected his own position, and, slowly drawing back his sinewy arm, he aimed straight for him who never dreamed of his peril.

The savage gathered his strength for the throw that was to inflict death upon an innocent man.

But Black Turtle made a slight mistake.

Before the weapon could leave his fingers the sharp report of a rifle broke the stillness, followed instantly by the death-shriek of the savage, as he flung his arms aloft and fell forward, almost against the log on which the Brainerd family were sitting.

The scheme of Jake Golcher and Black Turtle was indefinitely postponed.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE shock terrified the whole camp.

Aunt Peggy dropped the piece of meat she was cooking, and sprang back with a gasp. The other Indians, accustomed as they were to violence, stared in blank wonder, while those on the fallen tree leaped to their feet and gazed at the figure of the Indian as he lay on his face, with his tomahawk clenched in his vise-like grip.

Jake Golcher was dazed, and neither spoke nor stirred until Maggie, in the very depths of her agony, ran to him and exclaimed:

"What is the meaning of this? Was he seeking father's life? If he was, it was *you* who told him to do it!"

The Tory looked in the white face of the girl, and said, in a surly voice:

"I didn't know anything about it."

"Oh, Jake," she continued, talking rapidly, and in such mental distress that every

eye was fixed upon her; "if this is *your* work, a just God will punish you for it. Father has never sought to injure you. We are neighbors, and belong to the same race—"

He attempted to turn away, but she caught his arm, and faced him about.

"You shall hear me. If you want human lives, take *mine*—take Eva's, but spare his gray hairs; do him a wrong, and as sure as our Heavenly Father reigns above, a punishment shall come to you. Show him mercy, treat us as human beings, and you will thank Him to your dying day that He led you aright, when you went so far astray."

The father would have gone forward and drawn her away, but he was held by her soulful eloquence.

She staggered back and would have fallen, had not Aunt Peggy, who, after all, was the most cool-headed one in the party, seen what was coming and caught her in her arms.

Half-supporting and half-dragging her, she got her back to the tree, where she gently seated her.

Poor Maggie threw her arms around the

good woman's neck and gave way to hysterical sobbing, while her aunt tried to soothe her.

Mr. Brainerd sat like a statue, but his lips trembled, and it required all the power of his will to keep from breaking down as utterly as did Maggie herself, who, flinging one of her arms around weeping Eva, gathered her and their aunt in an embrace, and surrendered to her tempest of grief.

The Senecas looked on, but if there was any glimmering of tenderness in their nature it did not struggle to the surface, and the trees around them could not have betrayed less emotion.

As for Jake Golcher, he scanned the picture with darker passions than those of the savages themselves.

He did not stir, but, when he saw Habakkuk McEwen look inquiringly at him, he beckoned him to approach.

The frightened fellow sprang to his feet and hurried across the short space, eager to do anything to win the favor of the other."

"Do you know who shot that Indian?" asked the Tory, in an undertone.

"I haven't the least idea."

"It was Fred Godfrey; he is somewhere near. The shot sounded out yonder"—pointing in the proper direction—"and, if you want to save your life, you must go out and bring him in."

"I'll do it," said McEwen, catching like a drowning man at a straw.

He turned about to start upon his strange errand, when Golcher commanded him to stop.

"How are you going to do it?"

"Catch him by the neck and heels, and drag him along."

"Don't you see the Senecas are starting off to hunt him up?"

It was true. The red men quickly recovered from the shock, and, knowing who fired the shot, were stealing off into the woods in search of the youth, who had given proof of his presence near them.

Almost every one was able to tell the point whence came the familiar bullet, and it will be understood that Fred Godfrey took his life in his hand when he interposed to save his father.

"I don't believe they will find him," said Jake Golcher, alluding to the Senecas, who were moving off in the darkness; "but you can join him, because he takes you for a friend; go out in the woods, signal to him, and when you find him, get him to come nigh enough to be catched. You can do it, and if you succeed, you shall be spared. Don't think," added the Tory, significantly, "that because we let you jine in the hunt you can slip off in the dark."

"Oh, I never thought of such a thing," protested the New Englander. "I always keep my promise, and I'll bring him back."

"There isn't one of these folks that can get away, for the Senecas are all around us. Gray Panther will soon be here with twenty more, and then we shall have 'em all."

If this were the case, Habakkuk might well have asked why Golcher wished him to join in the search. But if such a question came to the mind of McEwen he did not utter it.

"If you try to run away you'll be brought back here and tomahawked inside of half an

hour; do your duty, and I'll take care of you; after you get out there in the dark you can signal to him in such a way that he'll show himself, and then you must prove your smartness by getting him to come with you to some p'int where we can pounce onto him. Do you understand?"

"It's all as plain as the nose on your face," said Habakkuk.

"Then be off with you!"

CHAPTER XLVI.

HABAKKUK McEWEN entered upon his strange mission with ardor. A few seconds carried him beyond sight of the fire, and he pushed forward until fully two hundred yards distant, when he paused, and listened.

He heard nothing of the Iroquois, who could not be far away.

"Over yonder lies the trail that leads to Stroudsburg," he said to himself, "and this is the first fair start that I've had since getting into this neighborhood. Such a promise as I made ain't binding; the way Fred Godfrey has been going on, I think he's able to take care of himself, and it's about time I did the same. I'm off for Stroudsburg, and nothing short of an earthquake shall stop me *this* time."

And thereupon he started like a frightened deer through the dark woods, with the resolve

that when the morrow's sun should rise he would be many a mile to the eastward, and far beyond the reach of Jake Golcher and his Senecas.

Meanwhile, Fred Godfrey, having done such good service for his friend, was equally alert in making the most of it. He did not forget that the sound of his rifle would direct the Senecas to the spot whence it came, and should he remain five minutes in the tree he would be at their mercy.

Consequently, the smoke had scarcely risen from the muzzle of his weapon, and the death-shriek of bloody Black Turtle was yet echoing on the air, when he came down as nimbly as a monkey and hurried from the spot.

The shot that he had fired was one of those unexpected things that startled the Senecas into temporary inaction, just enough to serve a quick-witted person like Fred Godfrey.

He was loath to leave the vicinity of the camp, but self-preservation commanded it, and he did not pause until a safe distance away.

His dread was that the Senecas would take revenge upon the whites for the death of their comrade, and the youth meant to return to a position that would enable him to interfere again, even though the risk were ten-fold greater than before.

But Fred had not listened more than a couple of minutes when he was detected by an Indian, who must have followed him some distance through the woods.

"Ugh! S'render—me kill!" growled the savage, bearing down upon him with upraised tomahawk.

"Surrender, eh? That's the way I surrender!"

And, to the terror of the red man, he found the muzzle of a pistol placed against his nose.

"Ugh! no shoot—me good Injun—ugh! Good Yengese!"

And the valiant fellow, ducking his head, and dodging from side to side, like the Digger Indians of California, in the vain effort to distract the aim of his enemy, went threshing through the wood without any regard to noise or dignity.

Lieutenant Godfrey could have stopped his career without trouble, merely by pressing the trigger; but he did not do so. He was a civilized soldier.

"Go in peace," laughed Fred, putting his weapon away. "Heaven knows I do not wish to take human life!"

As the youth had now reached a point where he could feel safe from his pursuers, he proceeded to reload his rifle.

In the darkness it required care, and was a task compared to which that of breech-loading of to-day is nothing. The few beams of moonlight that had disclosed him and the Seneca to each other helped him to pour out the powder from the horn around his waist, and to adjust the quantity in the pan of his flint-lock.

"If I continue this picking off of warriors, one at a time," muttered Fred, "I will be able to thin them out before morning."

He was reminded of the delicacy of his position, by hearing low whistling on his right.

"Doubtless that is the one I drove away,"

was his reflection. "He wants to call some of his brothers before I leave, so he can reward me as an Indian likes to reward one who shows him mercy. But, hello!"

Like a flash came the thought that the peculiar signals that had been going on for some minutes were not those of an Indian, but of his friend, Gravity Gimp.

"I do believe it is he, calling to me," said the lieutenant, as he stationed himself in the shadow of a tree, and, holding his weapon ready for use, cautiously answered the hail, which sounded clear and distinct on the still summer night.

Instantly came the reply, and then he replied in turn, so that communication was established, and whether the other was a friend or foe, it became evident that he was approaching.

The lieutenant did not feel free from fear, for he was aware of the subtlety of the foes against whom he was contending, and nothing was more natural than that they should resort to such a simple artifice to mislead him.

He therefore ceased answering the call when

it came close, but held himself ready to fire and withdraw the instant he should detect the deception.

A figure was dimly seen in a small, moon-lit space in front, advancing upon him in a crouching posture. Fred fastened his eyes on the shadowy outlines, and he grasped his gun with both hands.

Just then the half-bent man straightened up, and, with a relief that was delightful, Fred recognized the form of Gravity Gimp, who had been hunting and signaling so industriously for the last fifteen minutes.

CHAPTER XLVII.

LIEUTENANT GODFREY and Gravity Gimp shook hands warmly, for they were overjoyed to meet in this manner, after their enforced parting a brief while before.

"It's a wonder that your signaling did not bring some of the Senecas to you," said the young officer.

"Dat's jist what it done."

"And how did you manage it?"

"When dey come I left, and I took such a path dat if dey tried to foller, dey run agin de trees, or fell ober de rocks and broke dar necks."

"Well, Gravity, you heard my gun, and I'll tell you how it was."

Thereupon the lieutenant gave the particulars of the taking off of the vengeful warrior known as Black Turtle, the Seneca, the African listening, meanwhile, with open mouth and staring eyes.

"Dat's wery cheerin'," said he. "Some ob dem Senekers am so stupid dat you've got to knock dere heads off afore dey knows anything; but, leftenant, I's got 'portant news to tell you."

"What is it?"

"Dar's somebody out in de woods dat ain't Injuns."

"Explain what you mean?" said Godfrey, with a thrill of hope.

"Afore you fired dat gun, and when ebery-ting was still, I heerd somebody talking out dare; dey kind ob whistled, like I's been doing, den I heerd whispers, and den de sound ob feet."

This was stirring news, indeed, to Fred. If it so proved that these strangers were white men, he might be able to rally them to the attack of Golcher and his Indian allies.

But, alas! if they should prove to be that portion of the band which withdrew a short time previous, their presence would settle forever all prospects of a rescue.

"How far off are they?" he asked.

"Only a short distance; foller me."

"Don't forget, Gravity," said the lieutenant, as he started with him, "that we're likely to run afoul of some of the Senecas, who are out hunting for me."

"I understand dat."

A few minutes later the African came to a stop, and said, in a husky undertone:

"Dis am de spot."

It was hard to imagine how the servant could identify it, for it was in the shadow of the trees, though a small, natural clearing was in sight, that itself being the guiding landmark.

But nothing was seen or heard that could justify the declaration of Gravity, who stood intently listening.

"I don't hear nuffin'," said he, a moment later. "I guess dey hab gone to sleep, and am snorin'. You ain't skeered, be you, lieutenant?"

"What is there to scare us?" asked Fred.

"I don't know ob nuffin, but I thought mebbe you knowed."

Just then Gimp got down on the ground, and pressed his ear to the earth. Immediately he called out:

"I hear footsteps—plain as day—jes' listen!"

Fred Godfrey knelt, and, Indian-like, touched his ear to the ground. As he did so, he caught sounds as if made by the feet of persons moving near them.

"I believe they are white men—God grant they are! Don't make any noise and we will soon find out."

Although he had little experience as a woodman, Fred believed, from the peculiarity of the slight noises that reached his ear, that they were those of his own race.

As a quick way to settle it, though it was an act of imprudence, he called out, in a guarded voice:

"Halloa there, friends!"

"Halloa; are you white?"

"Yes—"

"What's de use ob lyin' so shamefully as dat?" broke in Gimp; "if I'm white den you're black."

"I declare, Gravity, I forgot all about it!" laughed the lieutenant, and then, raising his voice, he said:

"We are one black and one white, fugitives from Wyoming, and hunting for friends."

"That hits us," was the response; and the next moment, to the surprise and delight of Godfrey, seven men came to view in the small moonlit clearing, and waited for him to advance and show himself.

He lost no time in doing so, and, as briefly as possible, explained how it was he and the African were there, and how necessary it was that help should be immediately sent their friends, in the custody of Jake Golcher, the Tory, and his Senecas.

"Now you're shouting," was the hearty response of the leader of the seven, who announced his name as Dick Durkee; "that's what we're here for, though we're a little behind time."

"Where did you come from?"

"I live pretty well back in the country toward Stroudsburg, and I heered two days ago that trouble was coming into Wyoming Valley. You see I got the matter so straight from a friendly Indian that I knowed there could be no mistake. It worried me so that I couldn't

sleep, and I told my wife that I was bound to take a hand in it. So I scoured through the country and got my six friends, all true and tried, and set out. We got here only a little while ago, when things looked so squally that I concluded to stop and find out something before going furder; that's the way it stands."

"Then you will help our friends out of their trouble?"

"That's just what we come for, and we don't propose to back out now."

"Give me your hand on that!" exclaimed the delighted Fred.

While the two were saluting each other in this effusive fashion, Gravity Gimp walked out in front of them on the clearing, and solemnly pressing the crown of his head against the ground, elevated his enormous feet in the air, and chuckled as he kicked:

"Reckon dere's gwine to be somethin' like a s'prise party for Mr. Jacob Golcher!"

CHAPTER XLVIII.

ALMOST unexpected piece of good fortune had befallen our friends, in the appearance of Dick Durkee, with his six sturdy companions, all armed and ready for an encounter with the Tories and Iroquois.

Learning that young Fred Godfrey had been a lieutenant in the Continental army, they insisted on putting themselves under him, at least so long as they were engaged in hostilities.

"Very well," said the youth, "I will accept the responsibility, because I know I have brave men to lead; but the work will be short."

As every minute was precious, and there was no saying what form of cruelty the captors of the fugitives might inflict, the plan was speedily arranged.

The camp was so near, that they expected to reach it within ten minutes, after which the

question between them and the Senecas would be decided in one-fifth of that time.

They were on the eve of starting in Indian file, when a furious threshing was heard, and a panting form plunged directly among them, stopping abruptly with an exclamation of fear, when he saw the figures around him.

"Can any of you gentlemen tell me whether this is Wilkesbarre or Stroudsburg?" he asked, recoiling as if uncertain whether he was with friends or foes.

"Why, Habakkuk," said Godfrey in return; "why, are you in such a hurry that you can't stop?"

"Well, well, well," muttered the terrified New Englander, recognizing his friend; "I was on my way to Stroudsburg, and didn't expect to meet you here, leftenant; what's up?"

"What has caused you to take such a sudden start?"

"I got the chance and I took it; I thought, from the rate I was going, that I ought to be pretty well nigh there by this time."

"The journey is still before you; but, when

I left the vicinity of the camp, you were a prisoner."

Habakkuk was loath to explain the strange cause of his presence in the woods, but, finding he was among friends, he finally told the story.

His listeners of course were astonished, for it seemed incredible that Jake Golcher should do anything of the kind.

"Since he sent you out to take me back," said Lieutenant Godfrey, "you must keep your word and produce me before him."

"But, leftenant, such a pledge ain't binding on one, is it?"

"It is when I help you carry it out, and that is precisely what I will do."

The New Englander was amazed, as well he might be, and Fred, not wishing to trifle with the poor fellow, who had been so buffeted by good and ill fortune during the day, explained how the plan could be executed without risk to him.

It cannot be said that Habakkuk took kindly to the project, even then, but in the presence of Durkee and his woodmen, he could not well refuse.

He was assured that he would be well taken care of, and, as time was valuable, the company started without delay.

Where every one understood the necessity of silence, they moved along like so many phantoms.

Gravity Gimp's knowledge was so thorough, that even in the gloom, relieved only now and then by a few beams of moonlight, he recognized the landmarks, and gave great help to Godfrey, who more than once was at fault.

After progressing in this labored manner for some distance they came upon a well-beaten path, where it was much easier to travel than in the unbroken wood.

They had not far to go, and were beginning to slacken their speed, when all were startled by hearing some one approaching from the front. Each man noiselessly stepped out of the path, and, with their guns grasped, awaited the issue.

The first supposition was that they were Indians, and, excepting through fear of complicating matters in camp, the strangers would have been assailed at once.

But at the very moment the two forms, as they proved to be, were immediately opposite, one of them was heard to speak:

"By gracious! Jim, this is the most dangerous latitude I ever was in."

This expression identified them, and Fred spoke in a guarded voice:

"Hold on, friends; don't be alarmed."

Naturally the strangers were frightened, and showed a disposition to break into headlong flight, but Durkee and his comrades quickly stepped into the path and surrounded them.

By the time this was done, the couple realized they were among friends, and they made themselves known.

They were two men who were in the Wilkesbarre Fort during the battle and massacre of the afternoon, and they had come up the eastern shore of the river to learn whether they could be of any help to the numerous fugitives at Wyoming.

They soon found it was too late to do much good, but they lingered in the vicinity and exchanged shots with several parties of Tories and Indians.

They prowled around after dark, when they saw matters going so ill that they concluded there would be no safety in returning to Wilkesbarre, where a panic had probably set in. They were now on their way to Stroudsburg, which was a haven of hope to so many fugitives in that flaming day and the following one.

They gladly agreed to join the rescuers, and, as each had a good rifle and ammunition, they were a most desirable re-enforcement.

CHAPTER XLIX.

BY this time the short July night was drawing to a close, and there were signs of the coming dawn in the east. All through the solemn darkness the massacre had continued, and scenes were enacted on both sides of the Susquehanna which the pen has never placed on paper, and which to-day come down to us only in the shuddering legends of those who looked upon and survived to tell of them.

Among the miscreants none was more inhuman than Jake Golcher, the Tory. But for his strong admiration of the pretty Maggie Brainerd not one of the little party of fugitives would have survived capture for fifteen minutes.

He was not the first, as he shall not be the last, bad man who has been restrained from evil by the sweet beauty of some maiden who, un-

consciously to herself, has woven her subtle web around him.

Had she walked up to him and promised to be his wife on condition that every one of her friends should be released, he would have complied, though he might have resorted to treachery afterward to gratify the demand for revenge on the part of his Indian allies.

But the father of Maggie had repudiated his claim, and the point at last was reached when he was forced to see that every one of the fugitives, including Maggie herself, looked upon him with unspeakable loathing, and they would die before humbling themselves to him.

"What's the sense of my fooling longer?" he growled, standing sullenly apart and glowering upon them; "they hate me worse than Satan himself, and if Maggie should pledge me her hand, that old father or the brother of her'n wouldn't let her keep her promise. The Injins have got so mad at my soft-heartedness that they begin to 'spect me, and they've gone over to t' other side the river to have their fun there, 'cause there ain't much prospect of gettin' it here."

The renegade spoke a significant truth, and, looking around, he was able to count precisely six Senecas who remained with him. Some of the others who were out hunting in the wood might return, but the chances were against it, and more than likely they had gone off to join in the orgies of which we only dare hint.

Striding across the brief space, Jake Golcher paused in front of Maggie Brainerd and said:

"You have had more mercy to-night than you had a right to expect, and more than you'll get any longer."

"Why do you talk to me thus?" asked the scared maiden, who could not fail to understand what he meant; "why do you feel such hatred of us who have never showed aught but kindness to you?"

"Bah!" interrupted the Tory, angrily; "why do you get over that stuff to me? I want no more of it. The time for begging mercy has gone by. If you had treated me right a while ago it would have been well—"

"Oh, Jake, how can you?"

The agonized girl was about to rush forward and throw herself on her knees before the

man, when her father, with flashing eye, interposed.

"Maggie, I forbid you to speak a word to such a scoundrel as he. Sit down and keep silence."

The obedient girl complied, as she would have done had she known that death was to be the penalty.

She placed herself beside Eva, and the two, wrapping their arms about each other, wept in silence.

Aunt Peggy, as if conscious the crisis had come, ceased her cooking and softly seated herself beside them, without a word.

Mr. Brainerd, proud and defiant as ever, sat bolt upright on the fallen tree, with arms folded, looking as keenly as an eagle in the face of the being whom he execrated above any of his kind.

The Senecas watched them all, and it was easy to detect the signs of impatience among them, for they had been baffled too long of their prey.

As Jake Golcher retreated a step or two the Indians uttered a short exclamation of surprise,

as well they might, for two figures strode fortoward out of the gloom in the light of the camp-fire.

One of them was Habakkuk McEwen, who led by the arm Lieutenant Fred Godfrey, the latter stepping briskly, while a strange half-smile hovered about his handsome mouth.

Mr. Brainerd and the rest of the fugitives were thunderstruck, and totally at a loss to understand the meaning of the spectacle.

Fortunately, they were not kept long in suspense.

The face of Habakkuk was wreathed in an all-embracing smile, though there was a certain delicacy in his position that prevented his smile becoming contagious.

"Well, Jake, I've brought you your man!" called out Habakkuk, in a voice tremulous with triumph and fear.

"You have done well," replied Golcher, as soon as he could recover his breath; "you have done better than I expected."

"It's all right now, then, ain't it—that is, with me?"

"Certainly; you've earned your freedom and can go. These Injins won't hurt you."

Golcher made a wave of his hand to the warriors grouped around and uttered an exclamation that insured immunity to the eccentric New Englander.

The latter wheeled about and walked straight toward the woods where his friends were awaiting him.

One of the most difficult things for a brave man to do is to stride deliberately off, without decreasing or augmenting his gait, when he has every reason to believe that some one is taking careful aim at him, and that if he doesn't get beyond range in a brief while he is certain to be punctured.

The expectation of receiving a bullet from the rear will make the chills creep over the most courageous person, and give an impetus to his gait like the actual prick of a bayonet.

Habakkuk McEwen walked only a dozen steps when he was so impressed by the situation, that he forgot his identity. With a howl he sprang several feet from the ground and

dashed off at the top of his speed into the woods, muttering:

"I'll be hanged if I can stand it; I believe every Injin squattin' there was taking aim at me."

Fred Godfrey and Jake Golcher at last stood face to face, and by the light of the camp-fire looked steadily in the eyes of each other.

"I'm here," said the lieutenant, in his ordinary voice, though he carefully measured his words: "Habakkuk McEwen has kept his pledge, and now I'd like to know what you are going to do about it."

"You would like to know, eh? Wal, I can soon tell you. I'm going to turn you over to these Senecas you see around you; one of them is throwing wood on the fire now; that's for you. More than one rebel has been roasted, and you are none too good to be served the same way."

"So you intend to burn me to death, Jacob, do you?"

"Intend to! I'm going to do so, sartin sure —that is, I'm going to boss the job, but I've promised to let the redskins have the fun of the thing."

"That's the idea, is it? And after I'm disposed of, what then? That is, what is to be done with my friends there?"

"I've no 'bjection to saying," replied the Tory, speaking loud enough for all to hear, "that the old fellow there and that she panther, Aunt Peggy, will be served the same way. The two girls will be taken back to York State with us, and sort of adopted by the Senecas."

All the individuals referred to heard these words, but no one moved or stirred. It may truthfully be said that they were so overcome for the moment that they were speechless.

"That's an imposing programme, Jacob, but, somehow or other, I think there will be a hitch in carrying it out."

"You think so, eh? Wal, you'll see mighty soon that there ain't no mistake about it. The fire is burning and about ready—"

"Jacob," said Fred Godfrey in a low voice, but with such significance that the Tory was transfixed, "I hoped that you would say and do something that would give me excuse for believing you less a miscreant than you are,

but you have persisted in shutting out all merciful thoughts—"

"Wh-wh-what d-d-do you m-mean?" stammered Golcher, beginning to feel a giving away in his knees.

"Do you suppose I was such a fool as to allow Habakkuk McEwen, one of my best friends, to bring me back a prisoner to you? You showed your idiocy in sending him out for me; but it is scarcely credible that you could really think he would ever show himself again. But he has, and here I am—

"And now, Jacob, I have the pleasure of informing you that you are at *my* mercy, and I have only to raise my hand—so—to have you riddled with bullets."

CHAPTER L.

AS Lieutenant Fred Godfrey slowly raised his hand, as if it were the signal for his friends to open fire, Jake Golcher collapsed.

Sinking down on the ground, as limp as a rag, he began begging in the most pitiful tones for his life. Indeed, he groveled so in the dirt that all the whites who looked upon him found their feelings of hatred turning to disgust and pity.

Fred Godfrey was disappointed, and, stepping back a pace or two, gazed on the miserable craven as he would upon a dog he had caught stealing sheep, and which was then cringing at his feet.

Instead of waiting until the patriot had proven the truth of his declaration, the renegade succumbed at once. It is hard to kick the wretch who clasps your knees, and the lieutenant, who was determined to rid the world of the man as soon as he had made the declara-

tion of his purposes respecting the captives, found his resentment gone.

Mr. Brainerd, with an expression of scorn, sprang up from the log and strode over to his son.

"In Heaven's name, let him go, Fred! Kick him out of sight, for he hasn't the manhood to stand up and be shot like a man."

"Get up!" commanded Fred, catching him by the collar of his coat, and jerking him to his feet: "I want to speak to you."

But Golcher was no sooner on his feet than he went to pieces again, groaning and whining, and begging for that mercy that he had so often denied to others.

Again the lieutenant yanked him to the upright position, and, finding him collapsed as before, he cuffed his ears until they tingled, shouting:

"Stand up, or you're a dead man!"

Finally, after wabbling about several minutes, Golcher summoned enough strength to keep his feet, though in a shaky condition; and finding he was not to be executed immediately, he managed to grasp the situation.

"I was going to say—What do you mean, Gravity?"

This sudden question was caused by Gimp, the African, who, with a chuckle, ran forward from the darkness that was beginning to give away before the approach of day, and, jamming his head down in the ground between Godfrey and Golcher, threw his huge feet in the air, and began kicking with such recklessness that one of them struck the lieutenant in the breast, nearly knocking him over, while the other sent the Tory recoiling some distance.

"Can't help it!" exclaimed the happy African; "Jake Golcher's s'prise party dat was to hab arriv, hab arroven, and me and Aunt Peggy feels like standin' on our heads, and kickin' de limbs off de trees."

Gravity used his feet rather too vigorously, and, swaying beyond the point of nature's gravity, came down on his back with a resounding thump; but he did not mind it, and leaping up, ran to the fallen tree, where he sat down among his friends with the most extravagant manifestations of joy.

It is not to be supposed that the six Senecas

remained idle spectators of this extraordinary scene. They were quick to comprehend what it meant, and had they but maintained guard for the preceding hour or two with their usual care the surprise could not have been effected.

But, if any warriors could feel warranted in believing themselves beyond danger of molestation from white men, it was those Indians who took part in the Wyoming massacre.

When they grasped their guns and glanced around, their eyes encountered a strange sight. It seemed as if a score of men had sprung from the ground like so many visions of the night, and every one of the Iroquois who used his eyes saw a gun leveled at him.

Had the scene occurred in Texas to-day, it would have been said that Dick Durkee and his foresters "had the drop" on the Tory and his Iroquois.

The latter saw they were caught, and they preserved a masterly inactivity, pending the negotiations between the two parties.

There was a threatened complication that might turn the tables again, and this time

against the patriots. Some of the Senecas were absent and were likely to come back. Gray Panther might be among them, and in such an event the whites were likely to find themselves between two fires.

"You poor fool," said Fred, when Golcher got into such shape that he could understand what was said to him; "stand up like a man, or I'll shoot you!"

"Yes—yes—yes, I—w-w-wi-ll; what do you want?"

"I want to make an agreement with you, and it's got to be done mighty quick or not at all."

Thereupon the Tory straightened up wonderfully; but, happening to look about him and to catch sight of the patriots standing, as it seemed everywhere, with their guns leveled, he was seized with another fit of shivering, and it was some time before he could compose himself.

"You see," said the lieutenant, "that you are at my mercy, and I'll treat you better than you deserve. I have but to give the signal, as I told you a minute ago, and ten seconds from

now there wouldn't be a Tory or red Indian standing alive in this camp. Every one of you is covered, but I'll agree to let you and them withdraw, on condition that you do so without a second's delay."

"I'll do it—I'll do it!" gasped Golcher; "I'll give you an escort to Stroudsburg, or anywhere you want to go."

"I rather think you won't," was the reply of Godfrey. "You have escorted us altogether too much as it is. Thank Heaven, we are in shape to take care of ourselves now."

"Wal, I'm ready to do whatever you want; fact is, leftenant, I never meant one-half I said about you, and I ain't half as mean as—"

"Not another word!" commanded Fred. "We'll attend to business now."

CHAPTER LI.

LIEUTENANT FRED GODFREY expected such a reception from Jake Golcher as would give him a suitable excuse for opening fire on the Tory and the Senecas, but the panic of the leader disarmed his enmity, and really forced the arrangement that was now carried out; one that, it may be said, was intensely disagreeable to Dick Durkee and his comrades, who were unwilling to spare such miscreants.

But the lieutenant was the commander, and there was no rebellion against his orders.

"Bring your warriors up here," ordered Fred, and Golcher made a sign for the Senecas to approach.

They moved forward a few paces, but, mistrusting the purposes of the patriots, refused to come further. Golcher berated, and ordered them to advance, telling them—what they

already knew—they were covered by the guns of the whites.

But they stood sullenly apart, and began moving in the direction of the river.

At this moment Dick Durkee called out:

"Lieutenant, shall we fire? We've got every wretch of 'em fast."

"Keep them covered, but don't shoot unless they raise their guns," called Fred, who was embarrassed by the unexpected turn.

"May I go with 'em?" asked Jake Golcher, in a cringing voice, beginning to back away from his dreaded master.

"Yes, go; and I pray Heaven none of us may ever look on your face again."

Fred should have been prepared for what followed, inasmuch as no one understood the treacherous nature of Tory and Indian better than he, but, as we have intimated, he was confronted by an unexpected condition of affairs, and was caught off his guard, so to speak.

He saw the warriors withdrawing, and already entering the wood on his left, while he stood in the full light of the camp-fire, calmly watching the movement.

"Fred, move away from there," called out his father; "you are too good a mark for them."

Fortunately, the young man stepped back and to one side, placing himself near Dick Durkee, who stood with cocked rifle, fairly quivering with rage, because he was forced to hold his fire.

Fred himself had his pistol at command, but he was without any rifle, having handed his over to one of his friends, when he went forward with Habakkuk McEwen.

The Indians were in the fringe of the wood, when all the former prisoners, who were sitting on the fallen tree, sprang up, and began moving away.

At this juncture one of Durkee's men shouted:

"Look out! They're going to shoot!"

The words were yet in his mouth, when Jake Golcher, with unparalleled treachery, raised the gun that he had caught from one of the Senecas, and aimed directly at Maggie Brainerd.

His position was such that only her father

understood his purpose, and he sprang forward to shield his daughter, throwing himself before her at the very moment the Tory discharged his gun.

With a groan of pain, the brave parent staggered a few steps and fell heavily to the ground.

"Just as I expected," exclaimed Dick Durkee. "Give it to 'em, boys! Don't spare one!"

With incredible celerity the Iroquois fired their guns almost simultaneously with the Tory, and then darted off like so many shadows through the wood, the dim morning light being insufficient to betray them in the thick undergrowth.

But Dick Durkee and his men returned the volley instantly, and sprang after them.

Fred Godfrey had not noticed the fall of his father, but, with his whole soul aflame at the outrage, he dashed toward the wretches, pistol in hand, determined to wreak vengeance on the party, who, he well knew, were inspired to the deed by Golcher himself.

On the edge of the wood, where the Senecas

had stood for a single moment when they fired their guns, two of their number were stretched lifeless, proving that the return volley had done some execution.

The settlers charged through the undergrowth without any regard to order and the peril into which they might precipitate themselves.

Had Gray Panther and his warriors appeared on the ground at that crisis, in all probability he would have drawn the entire party into ambush, and cut them off to a man.

But the fleeing force was too small to attempt a stand, or any such tactics, and they devoted themselves entirely to getting away.

They were more expert in this than their pursuers, and scattering—as is the custom of the red men to this day, when closely pressed —each used all his energy and cunning in flight.

Dick Durkee and his men, including Fred Godfrey, went crashing and tearing ahead, glaring in front and to the right and left in quest of a target, but finding none, until, when the blind pursuit had lasted fifteen min-

utes or more, it dawned on those concerned that it was idle to attempt anything more.

Then they stopped for breath, and, turning about, began straggling back toward camp.

Fred Godfrey would have been the last to rejoin his friends had he not been seized with a dread that something might go wrong with those who were left defenseless.

He therefore hastened, and in the gray light of the morning came upon a scene of sadness.

Richard Brainerd, his step-father, lay on his back, with his head in the lap of Maggie, while Eva was weeping over him, and Aunt Peggy was standing beside them, her face streaming with tears.

Gravity Gimp was rolling on the ground in an agony of sorrow, for he saw what was apparent to the young man—the loved father and master was dying.

Fred knelt by his side, and taking a whisky flask from the rough but kind-hearted Dick Durkee, pressed it to the white lips of the sufferer.

"It's no use, Fred," said he, with a sad smile; "I'm done for. Jake Golcher fired

that shot, but he meant it for Maggie, and not for me. I'm close to death."

"I hope it isn't as bad as that," said Fred, through his tears, his manner showing he could not believe his own words.

"It's as well that I should go," said the old man, rallying slightly; "and I'm thankful that the rest of you escaped. Good-bye, Fred."

The youth took the hand that was already growing clammy and limp, and, returning the pressure, could only murmur:

"Good-bye, good bye; would that it had been I, rather than such a noble father as you have always been to me."

Gravity Gimp, rousing to a sense of the situation, rushed forward with irrestrainable grief, and shook the hand of his master, bending over and kissing his forehead.

Aunt Peggy did the same, and then came the last, sad parting scene between the father and his loved daughters.

The murmured words were heard only by Maggie and Eva, who treasured them up in after-years as the most precious mementos of their lives.

When the mild, loving eyes of the parent gradually grew dim, they rested upon the tearful faces of the two girls; and, as he entered the land of shadows, his last memory of the world he left behind was illumined by those two yearning countenances, whose kisses were pressed upon his lips. And the dark angel, reaching out his hand, took that of the patriot, and led him through the shadowy valley into the bright realms beyond.

CHAPTER LII.

AMONG the most eager pursuers of the treacherous Tory and his Seneca allies, was Habakkuk McEwen, who had withdrawn to the rear of the settlers that held the Indians at their mercy during the interview between Jake Golcher and Fred Godfrey.

The natural timidity of the new Englander led him to do this, but he was so infuriated by the act of the party, that he lost all thought of personal danger, and charged through the wood at the very head of the avengers.

McEwen had no rifle, but he quickly supplied himself with one. Catching sight of a Seneca who had fallen before the volley of Dick Durkee and his comrades, he snatched the weapon from his rigid grasp and sped along like a deer.

He had ammunition, and a hasty examination showed that the gun was unloaded. With a coolness hardly to be expected, McEwen

stopped in his pursuit and deliberately recharged the rifle, which seemed to be a fine weapon.

"I don't want to be catched without anything to help myself with," he said to himself, resuming the chase.

This was conducted in such a blind, headlong fashion, that Habakkuk speedily found himself not only out of sight of the Indians, but of his comrades, who were threshing in different directions, some of them shouting like madmen.

"I think they'll make for the river," concluded the New Englander, after a moment's pause, "and I'll keep on till I reach the water myself."

As the flush of the first excitement wore off, Habakkuk began to doubt whether he was doing a prudent thing, in chasing a whole war party in this single-handed style.

"I'll take a little pains that they don't get after *me*," he thought, beginning to use more caution in his movements.

It was a considerable distance to the Susquehanna, but he pushed on, and just as the gray

light of the morning was penetrating the wilderness and spreading over the water, he caught the familiar gleam of the beautiful stream.

Looking across, he paused in silent contemplation of the familiar scene. Naturally, he first noticed that landmark so well remembered by old settlers, which was known as the "umbrella tree," on account of its peculiar shape, and which was visible a long distance, standing as it did on the mountains of the western shore.

But he was withdrawn from viewing the general features of the landscape, by the sight of the heavy smoke that rested like a pall on the other bank. It partly shut out from sight the straggling houses, most of which were smoldering ashes, and suggested the awful desolation that had been wrought in Wyoming Valley during the few hours that had passed since the memorable battle was fought near Forty Fort.

"I've no doubt pandemonium was let loose there last night," muttered Habakkuk, "and it was a good thing for us that we got across

when we did, and a much better thing that Dick Durkee and his men j'ined us—Hello!"

He was standing where his body was pretty well screened, and was wondering that he saw no one moving, when he was alarmed by a splash in the water a short distance above him.

Fearful of being discovered, Habakkuk crouched down, and cocked his gun.

"It must be some of the scoundrels, who are everywhere; I hadn't orter been quite so rash—"

At that moment some one sprang into the river, and, wading out a short distance, began swimming for the other shore.

The timid patriot did not dare look out at him until he had gotten some distance away, when he peeped through the undergrowth, and scrutinized the head and shoulders that were moving rapidly across the stream.

Then, to his amazement, he recognized the man as Jake Golcher, the Tory, who had wrought all this ruin and sorrow; though Habakkuk was far from suspecting the whole result of the shot of the renegade.

"By the great Cæsar! it's him," gasped

Habakkuk, trembling with excitement; "and that gives me a chance to win some laurels with the other folks, especially with pretty Maggie."

Assuming a kneeling position, he took the most careful aim of his life at the unsuspecting ingrate, and when certain there could be no miss, pulled the trigger.

There was no flash in the pan nor miss of aim. The career of Jake Golcher ended then and there, with a suddenness and freedom from suffering that were mercy compared to what he deserved.

Habakkuk McEwen lingered long enough to make certain that there was no mistake, and then he stealthily reloaded his rifle before stirring from the spot. He was apprehensive when several Indians appeared on the other shore and showed some signs of an intention to cross the stream.

This was enough for McEwen, who scrambled out of his hiding-place, and scarcely paused until he reached the camp, where he came upon the sorrowful scene to which we have already referred.

Mr. Brainerd was no more, and the mourning friends, having rallied from their first shock of grief, were preparing to leave the spot, which for a while to come must be one of exceeding great danger to them.

After some consultation, Fred Godfrey, Dick Durkee, and Gravity Gimp tenderly lifted the body and carried it to a mass of rocks but a short distance away.

Had they possessed a shovel they would have given it burial until they could return, but that was impossible.

Accordingly, it was laid away in a natural sepulchre, and the boulders were so piled around it as to prevent disturbance from animals; then all bade it a tearful adieu, and the faces of the little party were turned toward the far-off settlements of the upper Delaware.

Already the sounds of firing and the shouts of Indians were heard from the other side of the Susquehanna, while terrified fugitives were continually encountered.

Some of these were in such sore extremity that they were taken charge of by Fred Godfrey and Dick Durkee. Maggie and Eva

Brainerd were so melted by their own sufferings that they found it impossible to pass by any of the poor beings without doing their utmost to relieve their distress.

And among all the fugitives that hastened in such horror from the Wyoming settlements that day, there were many who had been smitten in a more cruel manner than the loving daughters, but there was not one whose woe was deeper than theirs.

Eva and Maggie bore it like the heroines they were, and but for their pale faces and swollen eyes no one would have suspected the depth of their anguish. They said nothing to show it, but were as busy and thoughtful for the others as though all were their brothers and sisters.

Aunt Peggy was silent most of the time, but now and then her hard features quivered with emotion, and she uttered anathemas against those who had wrought all this mischief and sorrow.

Gravity Gimp was the most demonstrative of the company, his sobbing and lamentations more than once bringing tears to the eyes of the others.

When Habakkuk McEwen made known that he had ended the career of Jake Golcher there was not one who would believe him; but, fortunately for the New Englander's reputation, his declaration was confirmed in an unexpected manner.

One of Dick Durkee's men was late in joining the party that started away that morning, but when he came he said that he, too, was stealing along the river bank, though a considerable distance above where Golcher entered it. As soon as he identified the Tory he raised his gun to shoot, but when he pulled the trigger he discovered that there was no charge in the weapon.

With an expression of impatience he proceeded to correct his mistake, and was in the act of pouring powder in the pan when the crack of some one's else gun sounded just below him.

The woodman could not see who fired it, but he saw the Tory throw up his arms and disappear, so that a second shot was unnecessary. He tarried, however, some time longer, and observed three Indians who swam out into the

river in search of the body, showing that they, too, knew who it was.

This settled the question; and henceforth Habakkuk McEwen became a sort of hero among his comrades, who shook him by the hand and congratulated him on the service done his friends.

The vanity of the fellow was flattered, and when he attempted to explain his previous conduct it was accepted good-naturedly; so that, before the day was over, he came to the conclusion that he was in point of fact the bravest and most dashing member of the company, and the one who ought to be the leader.

The mountains were passed in safety, and it was not without some misgivings that the party entered that desolate stretch of wilderness several times referred to as the "Shades of Death."

What was dreaded more than anything else was the want of provisions, which was sure to cause suffering.

Habakkuk McEwen was the only one in the company who had a particle of food, and when that came to be distributed among eight or

ten women that had been gathered about them, it was scarcely more than an aggravation of hunger.

Our own friends, it will be remembered, had eaten a substantial meal of young pig the previous evening, and were in much better form than many who had fled from Wyoming, and had partaken of no food during the previous twenty-four hours.

The sufferings of the fugitives from Wyoming in passing through the "Shades of Death" were dreadful, as is always the case where such large bodies flee in a panic.

Many children were born, and perished in the wilderness. Strong men lay down and died, and the bones of the victims marked every mile of the way.

But there were many who survived, and one bright summer morning all our friends reached the hamlet of Stroudsburg, so far removed from the scene of massacre that every cause for alarm had passed.

There were fugitives before them, and the hospitality of the villagers was taxed to the utmost, but they gladly met every demand.

The weather was so mild that much suffering had been saved the settlers, whose trouble rose mainly from the lack of food.

In Stroudsburg were old friends and relatives of the Brainerds, who did everything in their power for them. It was arranged that Maggie, Eva, and Aunt Peggy should stay with them indefinitely until there could be no risk in going back.

The anxiety of the brother and sisters was that the body of their father should be laid away in proper form, and Fred Godfrey and Gravity Gimp went back to Wyoming for that purpose.

When the sad duty was finished they once more made their way to Stroudsburg, where the young patriot bade his friends a tender adieu, after which he started to join the Continental army under Washington.

Habakkuk McEwen went with him, and, despite a manifestation of his natural timidity now and then, made a good record. Both he and Fred, who had become a captain, were present at the surrender of Yorktown, which ended the struggle of the colonies, and estab-

lished the independence of the United States of America.

When they returned to Wyoming the settlements had recovered, to a great extent, from the visitation of the Tories and Indians three years before.

The Brainerd homestead, which was partly burned, was restored to a substantial condition, and Gravity Gimp was as big and strong and devoted as ever.

The rich soil needed but to be "tickled with a plow" to "laugh a harvest," and it yielded bountifully. There had been several incursions by Indians, during one of which the little girl, Frances Slocum, was taken off by a party of Delawares. Her wonderful history is part of that of Wyoming.

But the Brainerd family suffered nothing further. Eva had grown into a blooming girl when Captain Fred Godfrey came back and joined them at the old homestead. All in due time, he took for his bride one of the blue-eyed lassies of Wyoming, and Maggie and Eva were equally fortunate in securing the best of partners for life.

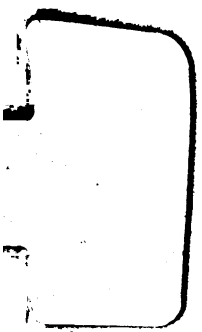
Peace folded her gentle wings over the scene of the stirring events that took place more than a century ago, and the thunders of war have never awakened the echoes along that part of the Susquehanna since.

May it ever be thus throughout our fair land, to the end of time.

THE END.

THE NEXT VOLUME OF THE "WYOMING SERIES" WILL BE "STORM MOUNTAIN."

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
REFERENCE DEPARTMENT

This book is under no circumstances to be taken from the Building

form 410